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The way to the best

THE WAY TO THE BEST

MILES H. KRUMBINE

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THE WAY TO THE BEST

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THE WAY TO THE BEST
— A —
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FOREWORD

Two of the sermons included in this volume were preached in Leon Mandel Hall, the University of Chicago. They are "A New Apostolate" and "The Adequate Witness." The sermon entitled "Sources of Personal Power" appeared in *The Christian Herald* under the title "Transformed by the Spirit" and is here used by permission. I am grateful to the editor of *The Century Magazine* for permission to use the concluding essay, "A Famine of Prophets," which appeared in that magazine February, 1922. The other sermons were all preached in the pulpit of the First Lutheran Church, Dayton, Ohio.

M. H. K.

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THE WAY TO THE BEST

THE WAY TO THE BEST

I

THE WAY TO THE BEST

St. Matthew 5:20 *"For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."*

JESUS had no personal quarrel with the scribes and Pharisees. Their righteousness was inadequate but not because He condemned it. He condemned it because it failed of its aim, to bring men and women to the best. Such moral incentives as they offered were mere mechanical devices for the manufacture of badges of honor to be worn externally. There was an utter lack of animation and spirit which might issue in deeds of righteousness. When quite a young man Benjamin Franklin conceived the idea of cataloguing the virtues. He found them to be thirteen in number. He then undertook the practice of one virtue a week, exclusively, thus covering the whole realm of goodness once every quarter. The device had logic on its side. It was simple and efficient. At the end of a year he ought to be a very virtuous man indeed. Need-

less to say our youthful adventurer soon abandoned his mechanical device for the achievement of virtue. It did not bring him to the best. It was, as a matter of fact, an exact reproduction of the ancient scribal and Pharisaic mode for attaining righteousness.

The kingdom of heaven is the realm of the best. The spirit of Jesus, dramatically set forth in the Sermon on the Mount, is the only sure guide to it. Jesus knew what was in man. He knew that men and women want the best. "It is hard for me to understand," wrote Richard Watson Gilder to a settlement worker, "a nature craven enough to be willing to put up in this life with anything but the best, the most noble, the absolutely perfect, the spiritually highest. The person who says, 'I am content with the shadows of things, the shams, the less fine, the impure,' is like one who would say, 'I do not like clean bread and meat, give me swill.' Every man is inescapably the guardian of his soul. That is his first duty in the world, to keep his soul clean. If he betrays his trust, he is not only a cowardly deserter, but he cannot escape by his default from impairing other souls." The Master's obvious aim is to dispel the illusion that scribal righteousness brings one to the best. The burden of His message is to furnish His friends an incentive, a motive, a guide to the best. His first stroke was to induce in their souls a deep and comprehensive desire for a righteousness that exceeds both in scope and in meaning the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees.

Lord Haldane in an address to the students of the University of Bristol struck off a phrase worth treasur-

ing—"cultivate a passion for excellence." That is the first step on the way to the best. "That is the most delicious feeling of all," remarked the youthful friend of Hazlitt "to like what is excellent." A general passion for excellence, for a righteousness exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees, will look after the mechanics of conduct. For the best is not an act of conduct but a way of living. Goodness is not an achievement but a trend of character. Professor John Dewey has convincingly pointed out that "the bad man is the man who no matter how good he has been is beginning to deteriorate, to grow less good. The good man is the man who no matter how morally unworthy he has been is moving to become better." The best is then to each one the discovered good, as Dewey elsewhere says. The tears of Magdalene and the gifts of Zaccheus are the first sign posts on the way to the best. They are outward symbols of an inner trend.

I

The righteousness that is more excellent involves first of all a way of thinking. It is not too much to say that the passages immediately following the words of the text point to a practical process by which the best is reached. They set in contrast the old way "ye have heard that it was said by them of old time" and the new "but I say unto you." They turn the attention from the external act to the inner attitude. The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees abstained from murder; the more excellent righteousness restrains hate.

The old way abhorred adultery, the new way cultivates the sweetened imagination. Always the emphasis is clear. The way to the best is, first of all, to think the best.

With telling insight the poet puts in the mouth of Guinevere these very revealing words:

> "For what is true repentance but in thought—
> Not ev'n in inmost thought to think again
> The sins that made the past so pleasant to us."

St. Paul, in his catalogue of "golden whatsoevers," analyzes the best in the spectrum of his own character, into its several elements: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report." Then by one of those swift phrases so characteristic of him he flashes a great light on the way to the best: "Think on these things."

Consider, for a moment, its opposite. What happens when you think the worst. A distinguished Scotch preacher has told us recently of a friend who stood at the top in his field of endeavor. He was learned, widely known and widely read. His scholarship and stability roused high expectations among his friends. Suddenly, when past forty, he went down in an exceptionally shameful moral disaster. His collapse was complete. He had to flee the country for shame. In a short while he was dead. The whole depressing affair was a mystery, until his effects were gone into. Among them were found several cupboards whose

shelves were laden with indecent, erotic French plays and novels. He thought the worst and so he came to the worst.

To hold the mind in the presence of the best is more than a pious platitude. Burne Jones assures us that "if there had been one cast from an ancient Greek sculpture, or one faithful copy of a great Italian picture to be seen in Birmingham when I was a boy, I should have begun to paint ten years before I did." The amazing career of that infant prodigy, Winifred Sackville Stoner, is the story of a wise mother persistently holding a child's mind in the presence of the best. The best pictures, the best stories, the best songs, were her daily fare, and so she came to the best. Great souls do not grow from mean thoughts; men do not gather figs from thistles. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he."

This brings us face to face with the difficult question of evil intruders in the thought life. Fortunate is that person who finds no satanic thoughts in his mental furnishings! Most of us find ourselves constantly annoyed by their unwanted presence. Luther's homely figure is still a classic on this point: "You can't prevent the birds from flying over your head but you can prevent them from building nests in your hair." Moreover, persistent thinking of the best weakens the capacity to think the worst. There is an attractive story of a young student who suddenly took a fancy to lewd pictures. The walls of his room were soon a gallery of suggestive prints. A friend came upon him and was dismayed. His heart was full of

solicitude for the student. He planned a counter campaign. He sent a few of Angelico's pictures of serene and holy angels, remarking as he did so "I guess that will drive the actresses out." And it did. How true it is that

> "Memory is a capricious wretch,
> She husbands bits of rag and straw
> And throws her jewels out the window.

But the will of man can choose the objects of memory's fancy. To think the best is the first step toward the best.

II

St. Paul rallies us not only to think the best but to do the best. No one saw more clearly than he how excessive meditation upon the best, too elaborate speculation about spiritual things usually militates against the realization of the best and against true spirituality. Wherefore he "commands" the Thessalonians to earn their own living and a little more for those who may be in need. So too does he urge the Philippians not only to "think on these things" but also to do them—"these things do."

The enemy of the best is not the worst. It is the second best. Our choice is never between what is definitely the very noblest and what is just as definitely the very lowest. The choice is always between the best and a slightly lesser good. "Sometimes the evil of the loss of the higher good," says Augustine, "is not

felt through the possession of the lower good." Even the flight of Satan from heaven to hell's dark shore was marked by stages of descent. Lot forsook the wholesome company of his uncle Abraham but he did not at once move to Sodom. He "pitched his tent toward Sodom." Nehemiah excelled because he refused to yield to the current standard of morality. It was a lax standard of mediocre ideals. He proudly challenged it. "So did not I because of the fear of Jehovah." The wistful plea of Jesus turns on this effort to get the folks of his day to overcome their guilty loyalty to the Mosaic, the conventional, code and adopt the best, the Christian code. His code grew from within outward. It obeyed an inner prompting rather than an outer prodding. Ultimately one can perhaps be sure one is doing the best only when one feels the claims of the inner voice more strongly than the suggestions of the social conventions.

"Moral progress, has in point of fact only been brought about," so Hastings Rashdall assures us, "by the acts of individual men and women who have had the courage to condemn, to go beyond, and to defy the existing code of public opinion at a given time and place." Jesus is of course the best example. Many names leap to remembrance. At the beginning of every era of advancement is a cross, a stake or a prison cell marking the place where the best was done, the second best condemned. The redeeming power of the Christ is just this power to evoke loyalty to the standard revealed in Him, loyalty that is steadfast at any cost. The very future of Christian civilization lies in

the lives of those who can live creatively, who can condemn the current code by transcending it. The future will be won on the field of moral honor more than in the class room of mental combat. Christianity is not primarily a thing to be studied but a deed to be done. Christ is not chiefly a teacher to be honored but a master to be followed. To be followed by implicit obedience to those flashes of inner vision, insight, that come to all who take Him seriously. This it is at last to do the best. It is not a book of rules but a rule of loyalty that we find in Him, loyalty up to the level of our powers and our best lights. In that combination of thinking and doing we find ourselves on the way to the best.

III

A friend of mine loves to point out that every great man has had either a great friend, a great teacher, or a great mother. He means to say that the way to the best is personally conducted. The popular definition of a university in a former day was "Mark Hopkins at the other end of a log." Given a guide you may expect to be conducted to the best. Every thinking Britisher felt bigger and better as he read Sir James Barrie's rectorial address on "Courage." A great guide led Britain through the dark passage of disillusionment to the place where it is light. The response in heightened moral was magnificent. Has not Jesus been reported as saying that a certain spirit should come, another Comforter, whose chief office it should be to "guide us?"

First of all we need to be guided into truth, the very truth of the best itself. The best is not always the obvious. Sir Joshua Reynolds, when he looked upon the madonnas of Raphael for the first time, wondered that any one should call them great. The best was not apparent forthwith. How eagerly we watch the reviews for a guiding phrase to conduct us to an opinion on some new book. Goethe slept for months with "The Vicar of Wakefield" under his pillow, seeking the companionship of the guide to the best. By the same token are we rallied to an undestanding of the beauty of holiness. God's revelation has always been a life of moral resolution. The best is always apprehended in the best person "with whom we have to do." We are guided to the best by being enabled to forward our own best projects of conscience. To quote Rashdall again, "the influence of the great personality consists simply in making people more disposed to do what their own consciences clearly recognize that they ought to do." After Garrison a Whittier and an Emerson spring to places of moral excellence. After St. Francis an order comes into being. After Jesus the plainest man and woman on God's earth finds nobleness possible, a nobleness that before Jesus was known only in a Socrates. The great man, the guiding personality, "pulls triggers in other men's consciences."

"We pitied him as one too much at ease
With Nemesis and impending indigence;
Also, as if by way of recompense,
We sought him always in extremities;
And while ways more like ours had more to please

Our common code than his uncommon sense,
There lurked alive in our experience
His homely genius for emergencies.

He was not one for men to marvel at,
And yet there was another neighborhood
When he was gone, and many a thrifty tear,
There was an increase in a man like that:
And though he be forgotten, it was good
For more than one of us that he was here."
—Edward Arlington Robinson.

It is at this point that Jesus makes his supreme claim upon us. In Him the historical and the spiritual meet. They are one. Distinction vanishes. Ever since, the sublimest spiritual activity must be to walk in the moral footsteps of the historic Christ. Christianity is distinguished by two things chiefly: a full revelation of God in an historical character and the continuing activity of the Holy Spirit. They are parts of the same whole. Says Browning's St. John,

"To me, that story,—ay, that Life and Death
Of which I wrote 'it was'—to me, it is,
Is here and now: I apprehend nought else."

Our only hope of achieving the best is to apprehend that living Christ and follow his guiding steps. Channing Pollock's "Fool" has significance for us because Mr. Gilchrist plots a serious attempt at the Christ-like life. He believes it no more difficult to live that life to-day than it was when it was first lived among men. It brought him happiness, satisfaction, the experience of the best. The test is open to us now. To attain the best we must think the best, do the best, follow the Best who has ever walked among men.

II

JESUS' FIRST SERMON

St. Luke 4:23 *"And all bare him witness and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth."*

St. Luke 4:28 *"And they were all filled with wrath in the synagogue as they heard these things."*

JESUS' first sermon in his home town produced a dual effect. It won both praise and blame. Men flattered the preacher until he meant to be more than eloquent; then they cast him out. His words were full of grace but his spirit was too strenuous.

The setting was perfect for a dramatic presentation of the thought and intent of Jesus. The appointed scripture for the day was that great passage of social idealism from Isaiah:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

It ministered to every instinct of pride in the heart of the patriot. Who would not thrill to such a presentation of national destiny! The very name "Isaiah"

was one to evoke passion and determination. Had not "the strength of Isaiah," in the opinion of a foremost Old Testament scholar, Sir George Adam Smith, "unaided by other human factors, carried Judah through the first great crisis of her history" thereby continuing her career for more than a century? The audience of Jesus was seething with patriotism. They were Galileans and Galileans had a name for patriotic fervor. Their emotional boiling point was very low. Small wonder that Jesus, a preacher of exceptional grace, should find a cordial response to his message. Times of national decay are exceptionally fitting occasions to recall the heroisms of the past. Lincoln is never so dear to us as when we tend to be least like Lincoln. Degenerate sons have most to say of their pious ancestors. This Galilean audience was easily stirred.

But why the sharp reaction? By what curious turn of events is the same audience led to praise and curse in almost the same breath? What ungracious word annulled the original verdict?

Little is known of Jesus' sermon. Enough is known fortunately to make out the cause of the bitter conduct of His countrymen.

I

As He sat down to begin His sermon He said, "Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." The meaning is clear enough. He is saying, "I mean to do something about it. I mean to proceed upon it. I mean to make this ideal the program of My life." Ordi-

narily, what can be more inspiring than the noble resolution of some young and talented leader, who has ideals and knows how to expound them. Nothing is calculated to win applause more than to hear a young preacher of charm and grace lay hold on a brilliant passage of idealism and magnify it. Common crowds rally to such a one. The Florentines flattered Savonarola out of all conscience at the outset of his career. They flattered, until they saw that his determination was more than platform dramatics. Then they burnt him. And so it was in Jesus' day. This brief passage of social idealism, set like a sparkling gem in the rough history of His nation, Jesus was assessing at its real value; He was determined to act upon it. Not content with glorification of the past, Jesus seeks to make the present great. The prophets' program is now to become the nation's habit of social life. He means to make it so. Ideals that have so long adorned men's minds He now thrusts as tools into their hands. The result was disastrous. His cool determination, projected into their super-heated patriotism, brought a quick precipitate of malice and meanness.

How much easier it would have been for Christ to utter the usual impassioned and fervent phrases; to send the congregation away full of pride and self-praise; to get Himself roundly applauded as a foremost patriot. Elbridge Gerry, at the American Constitutional Convention, uttered a revealing if disheartening sentiment: "The people do not want virtue but are the dupes of pretended patriots." He refused to sign the Constitution, "the grandest work of the hand of

man." How often the leader takes a low view of human nature in order to gain his own ends, ends that are narrow, selfish, parochial. How often the emotional currents that sway the popular crowd find a voice in the leader. Let the leader ratify the prevailing prejudices of the time if he wants our following. This is the test we put to the idealist.

The test is subtle. Few pass it. Patience which extends beyond one's own life time is hard to come by. To remain a chronic idealist is possible on one ground only, the ground of faith; faith that "the universe is on the side of the loving will." Jesus had it: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." The juniper tree in the backyard of every idealist was not for him.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the most discouraging item on the horizon of our social assumptions is the naïve feeling that general progress toward a Christian goal for society is being made. We assume that civilization is tending Christward. We take for granted that men and women are yearning for the Christian program of social ethics; that the popular slogans of every day are the inspired utterances of the Divine. We hold a shamelessly uncritical, if not uninformed, view of the serious business ahead before we can negotiate even a partial Christianization of our corporate life. The voice of the people is far from being the voice of God.

Civilization never has accepted the ethics of Jesus. It is a question whether the church ever has seriously thought about the ethics of Jesus, particularly after the

second century. The morality taught by Jesus was a vital force both in the individual and the social life of the early church. Up to the establishment of the monasteries the Christian community undertook to practice the principles of living taken from the teaching of the Master. With the establishment of the monasteries the Puritan party, the party which undertook seriously to be Christian in its conduct, withdrew from the active life of the Christian community. That left the Christian churches with average members only, who were dominated by the current moral ideas of the time. These ethical ideas were Greek in origin. The Pauline ethics gradually vanished from the Christian world. "The Christian world accepted Christian ideas of morality but without the enthusiasm which made them a transforming force," says Hatch, in his authoritative work, "The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church." Moreover, in the last half of the second century and the first half of the third an enormous change came over the Christian community from another direction. The interests of contemporary writers became so absorbed with the struggles for soundness of doctrine as to leave but little room for a record of the struggle for purity of life. The attention of a majority of Christian men was turned to the intellectual as distinguished from the moral element in Christian life." By the time of Ambrose of Milan, the foremost Christian leader of his time, the victory of Greek ethics was complete. While Christianity was being transformed into a system of doctrine, the Stoical jurists at the imperial court were slowly elabo-

rating a system of personal rights. The Sermon on the Mount, in other words, gave way to the stoic ethics of Roman Law. "The basis of Christian society," from that time to this, "is not Christian but Roman and stoical . . . the transformation is so complete that the modern question is not so much whether the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount are practical, as whether, if practicable, they would be desirable."

We stand at that point to-day. There is as much opposition to the Christian principles of morality within the church as without the church. The resistance erected against the sweeping principles of the abolition of war, the Christianization of industry, the purification of politics, integration of mankind, is quite as great in the church as out of it. Civilization is not only not Christian but does not pretend to be Christian in its moral practices. Historical Christianity has not derived its ethical teachings from the Sermon on the Mount.

No one who takes current religious controversy seriously can remain deceived as to its nature. We are again magnifying doctrine above morals; creed above conscience. Belief is again being exalted above conduct as a test of discipleship. The Sermon on the Mount is again being ignored while we battle over the creeds of the middle ages. Where is now the spirit of Luther who set out to turn, like some Hercules, the purifying stream of Christ-like morality into the Augean stables of contemporary social life? What of the spirit of Wesley whose main concern was with the impoverished spiritual and the decadent moral life of

his time? Or the spirit of Dwight Moody who made his main assault on the strongholds of sin while he left to lesser men the doctrinal wrangling? What modern life needs is some Christ-like soul who can keep his zeal trained on the social impurities, who can bring healing for the leprous condition of our life; someone who can quicken our determination to make the social idealism of our Master the ethical practice of modern life.

II

The second statement that the Master made was a warning. He warned His hearers that if they did not act on the social ideals of the prophet their nation would certainly miss its chance and that another might well enter into the blessings designed for them. This was contrary to the social imagination of His hearers. It was distinctly not a social flattery. It was highly "unpatriotic." But Jesus supported His utterance with scripture, which made it so much the worse: "Of a truth I say unto you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; and unto none of them was Elijah sent, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed but only Naaman the Syrian." What the widows of Israel lost a foreigner won; what the Syrian leper received the

national lepers might have had. The nation ignored the prophet and lost the prophet's blessing. Foreigners turned to the same prophet and won the rewards of his helpfulness. What heresy could have been greater before an audience of bitter patriots? It was a thrust at the very vitals of their blind pride. It was like telling a robust man who takes pride in his strength of a fatal defect of the heart.

We are dealing here with a timely issue. Jesus has uttered a Kipling's "Recessional" at a national jubilee. The antiphonal "lest we forget" fails to blend with the proud boast of empire. But its effect is clean lost unless we train the searchlight of history upon his meaning. What might have been the result if His nation had listened and obeyed Jesus? What conceivable future might the accepted leadership of Jesus have carved out for His nation? A brilliant essayist has reminded us that if the nation had "given Him the response for which He asked, and of which He knew them capable, we should not only have seen the forces of early Christianity multiplied more than a thousandfold, but the tremendous force of Jewish patriotism, instead of driving the race on to the fatal fight with Rome, would have found its true activity in a more glorious warfare in conquest of the world. It is reasonable to suppose that this could have happened, and that, had it happened, the history of the world would have shown at that time a change for which no term would have been adequate but the coming of the Kingdom of God. As it was, Christianity overran the Empire in three centuries following: multiplied as it

might have been, it would have given the Empire a soul to live by before it was too late, and would certainly have anticipated the barbarian invasions by an invasion of the Gospel that would have obviated the Dark Ages." It might have been!

The only fitting question to properly agitate our modern mind is, how far will our patriotism take us without Christ? It did not take the Jews very far. Another generation after this sorry scene in His home town and the nation was gone. It went down in a rough and bloody sea of pagan conflict. It could not afford the profession of high social ideals on which it not only had refused to act but resented leadership that would act on them. Here is food for thought. The nation could not continue for more than a generation after it rejected Christ. Is the debacle of Western civilization a repetition of the age-old fallacy that to be Christian you need only believe in and glorify with the tongue the aims of Jesus. Must one be resigned to the passing of our day of grace and wait for its rising in some newer, or perhaps older, civilization? God forbid that we should try to cast from our tarpeian rock the lone prophet who offers us a program of action.

We are face to face here with the severest temptation put to the idealist. Is he prepared to thrust his universal viewpoint upon a generation whose more transient viewpoints are so compelling? "To every historic moment, transient as it is," says Simkhovich, "its momentary passions are by far more absorbing and exciting than a general insight if ever so true to

life. These passions of the moment have naturally enough their spokesmen. More universal viewpoints may also have their spokesmen but in a conflict between the moment and eternity which is it that is going immediately to conquer? Unquestionably the moment; for it is the moment that is passionate, blind and aggressive." This the idealist understands. To insist on a comprehensive program of social action in harmony with professed ideals requires a fortitude of heart and an integrity of mind of a very high order. Certainly the present is a time full of misgiving. In every land in the Western world idealism finds itself greatly embarrassed. Our hopes ran high during the war. We lived beyond our greatest capacities; we were moved by ideals great with promise and pregnant with meaning. A new world, and a better one, was truly to be ours for our blood and tears. And lo, we live to-day on the husks. The idealist has perhaps only one response: "Christ's insight was one which future generations may rediscover but can never upset." We too will have to act on our ideals, ideals now found in the rubbish of post-war hates, suffocated in the monoxide of low-level life, or be content to see our great chance slowly slide to another center of civilization.

III

Consider in this connection the visit of the Greeks during the fatal last week. That visit gives Jesus a chance to run away, with honor. It lays before Him

the enticing opportunity to transplant His effort into another environment, an environment supposedly more friendly and receptive; in short, to run away from his task in the hour of danger. Will He confess Himself beaten on one field and seek compensation on another? Will He betray the simple folks who rallied to the hopes He raised in them only to raise new hopes in other simple folks in a strange land?

One can't probe the mind of Jesus and say with confidence what He thought and how He met this temptation. How many a movement fails because the leader can't resist the visit of the Greeks! Certainly he must have asked Himself, "Can the idealist ever be beaten?" "In all the encounters that have yet chanced," wrote Emerson, "I have not been weaponed for that particular occasion, and have been historically beaten, and yet I know all the time that I have never been beaten; have never yet fought, shall certainly fight when my hour comes, and shall beat." Ramsay MacDonald, the practical idealist of 1914, goes out of public favor into the night of social rejection and disgrace, a beaten man, only to be borne on the shoulders of a wiser and much chastened national determination into the prime minister's seat in 1924. Few idealists are vindicated so soon; not many distinct defeats are turned into victory in so short a time. But the principle at work is the same. Can an idealist ever really be beaten?

Jesus met this test by reavowing his faith in the ultimate and complete triumph of moral forces. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." Defeat is only a seeming reality. Triumph is certain. Moral ideals

rule in the end though for a moment the senses are autocratic. The main thing is to hold to that faith.

IV

Manifestly what Jesus was pleading for in this first sermon in His home town was an adequate sense of urgency. He was attempting to rally His hearers to a comprehensive social effort. He was trying to beguile them into action by holding before them a lucid and significant passage of social idealism. The point of His sermon dare not be lost on us to-day. The startling fact of contemporary religious life is not its loss of faith but its loss of zeal. John Wesley wrote of a certain man in Georgia who turned apostate, "by indulging himself in harmless company he first made shipwreck of his zeal and then of his faith." We may make shipwreck of our faith because we are permitting our zeal to languish.

Many are the epochs of failure in the history of the Christian movement. H. G. Wells recounts one of the most brilliant failures in "The Outline of History." "In 1264 Kublai Khan sent a mission to the Pope with the evident intention of finding some common mode of action with Western Christendom. He asked that a hundred men of learning and ability should be sent to his court to establish an understanding. His mission found the Western world popeless, and engaged in one of those disputes about the succession that are so frequent in the history of the papacy. For two years there

was no pope at all. When at last a pope was appointed, he despatched two Dominican friars to convert the greatest power in Asia to his rule! Those worthy men were appalled by the length and hardship of the journey before them, and found an early excuse for abandoning the expedition." Christendom is expending millions in money and hundreds in men and women to win the very kingdom that lay within its grasp and that it might have had but for a lack of a sense of urgency. What will the future historian write of our present era? It is ours to say whether this shall be another epoch of brilliant failure or an era of spectacular success. The Sermon on the Mount is no more than another series of beautiful sayings such as the Analects of Confucius unless we make out of it a program for social action.

Whether John Wesley's test of a sermon's effectiveness may be applied to Jesus' first sermon is debatable. How often Wesley writes in his journal, "It pleased God most to bless the first sermon most because it gave most offense." Certainly the first sermon of Jesus gave abundant offense. He was not again asked to preach in that pulpit. Again, as Wesley so often records, "I believe I am not to preach there again." But what a challenge Jesus threw out. It is interesting to speculate that from that audience came one who greatly enriched our literature and became the first of the notable martyrs, his own brother James, a man destined to play a decisive part in the Christian cause. And so to-day if but a few of us can respond to Jesus' appeal the movement is destined to progress. On even

one soul a new turning point of Christian history may depend.

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide:
In the strife of truth with Falsehood for the good or evil side:
Some great cause God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand and the sheep upon the right,
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and the light.
Hast thou chosen, O my people, on whose party thou shalt stand,
Ere the Doom from its worn sandals shakes the dust against our land?"

The vision we need now is not so much the light of a new social idealism, Jesus furnishes that, as the proper way we can relate ourselves to the ensuing effort to make that idealism effective. The issue becomes an acute personal problem. The hour of destiny has again struck. Brave hearts and willing souls are again girding themselves for the fray. God forbid that the issue find us still unstirred!

"For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brethren; be he ne'er so vile
This day shall gentle his condition.
And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not there."

III

THE ADEQUATE WITNESS

Acts 1:8 *"Ye shall be my witnesses."*

WHEN Bernard Shaw said, "Christ's is the only name that came out of the war with credit," he paid a pretty compliment to Jesus. But he also uttered a severe indictment of modern Christians. If the failure of modern Christendom cannot be laid at the door of Jesus, as it cannot, it must be the fault of his followers. If the Gospel is vindicated then its advocates are guilty. None of us would pretend that our modern world is the kind of a world Jesus wanted us to have. This is not to give way to pessimism. It is not to yield to despair. It is to acknowledge fact. Even a superficial estimate of modern life reveals enough points of friction, plague spots in our social life, to indicate the stiff work that remains to be done before the world of Jesus' vision can become a reality. This acquisitive society is sick, some think unto death. Our "power civilization" is drunken, some say unto forgetfulness and delirium. Materialism is riding in state, some suggest unto godlessness. Humanity lifts up pleading arms to a longed for savior. Mankind yearns with a sincerity that is pathetic for healing and redemption. "How long, O Lord, how long!"

I

The only scheme or plan Jesus left, whereby a Christian social order may be achieved, is contained in the simple words, "Ye shall be my witnesses." The radical trust He put in common folks is paralleled only by His untainted trust in God. His reliance upon personal loyalty was so great that it deserves our deepest consideration. At a critical hour during the American Revolution, an hour when men's hearts were turning to water while they clamored for more cleverness, better schemes, smarter plans from their leaders, Washington very quietly turned to a regiment of recruits and said, "I am counting on you men from Connecticut." It is the way of Jesus, dependence on personal competence and loyalty. "The program of Christianity," says Professor Bosworth of Oberlin, "is the conquest of the world by a campaign of testimony through empowered witnesses." It is Christ's program to-day.

Long since Huxley showed us that "the ethical progress of society depends not on imitating the cosmic process, still less on running away from it, but on combating it. The history of civilization details the steps by which man has been successful in building up an artificial world within the cosmos." A world of personal values must get itself established by personal effort. In other words, Christianity is set to build up a world of personality, a spiritual world, within the realm of things. To this end natural laws and material things are inadequate. A world of personality is set

up not on impersonal principles but on personal relations. Wherefore we can't depend on science to save us though the scientist can help. It is the will and character of personality giving direction to the use of the facts and forces of life that is our hope for a renewed Christendom. Bertrand Russell has it when he writes, "only kindliness can save the world." Kindliness is a personal force.

Indeed the very development in science, in skill in the control of natural forces, the increase of knowledge and ingenuity, have conspired to make a healthier, happier, more nearly Christian world more difficult to attain. Singular as it may seem our progress for the last several generations has probably been registering definitely against the development of a Christian world order. Consider the new knowledge in the realm of physical science. Men claim to know how to use certain deadly gases, lethal rays, electrically controlled and unmanned airplanes in such a manner as to wipe out a city like London in several hours, killing every living thing in it. By the token of the last war these forces will be used in the next war. A beginning full of ill omen was made then. Such knowledge, "progress" some call it, is making it more difficult to achieve a Christian world order. Manifestly, as a brilliant scholar suggests, "the only way out is that we should eventually renounce the power to injure each other which we now possess. But this is necessarily a spiritual fact." Beecher said, "the reforms are all right but I can't stand the reformers," while Emerson agreed

that the inventions are good but the inventors a nuisance.

"Ye shall be my witnesses!" It is a call to spirituality! It is an appeal for the operation of personality in loyalty to Him! It is a call to relate ourselves to Him in such a way as to become foci for the radiation of Jesus' kindliness. It is an imperial command to take up the Master's ideal of human helpfulness. The modern world will be saved from destruction, chiefly self-inflicted, only by the contagion of the good life. We acquire kindliness only as we are mastered by Christ who is kindly, only as we make our lives one long, clear testimony to His reality.

It is of course unnecessary to point out that when Christ said, "Ye shall be my witnesses," He was not asking us to be mere spectators of an interesting movement, making liberal comment on the awkwardness of the principals; exercising critical judgment over their mental and moral singularity. Nor was He, on the other hand, asking us to become social nuisances, giving way to petty criticism of our social order while we hold ourselves strictly aloof from its dirt and duty. Christianity was not intended primarily as a party in opposition. The adequate witness of Christ is simply the man or woman deeply immersed in the social problems of the time, with hand, heart and mind dedicated,

"That the rages
Of the ages
Shall be cancelled and deliverance effected from the darts that were,
Consciousness the Will informing, till It fashion all things fair."

Too much modern moral enthusiasm evaporates in indignant lashing of our blundering leaders. Too much ethical idealism is wasted in these clever diatribes on the debacle of civilization. We are forever taking the temperature of the patient and feeling his pulse that we may more accurately announce the date of his demise. But what is needed is a competent physician. What is needed is healing. Civilization is afflicted with an epidemic of evil that is very virulent and very deadly. Only heroic measures can possibly save it.

The cost may prove great. Constructive, sustained effort of any kind makes severe exactions. "Speak the truth and life becomes dramatic forthwith." Live the right, practice love, insist on purity, demand justice and it may cost you your life in sacrifice, self-renunciation, social rejection or even worse. The adequate witness is what the word literally translated means, a "martyr."

This whole matter is not very attractive to the modern mind. It raises curious ghosts of the past. The men and women who have always been held up to us as adequate witnesses are exactly the kind of men and women we shy from as companions. They are the puritan type. And of course it is a sign of modernity to say something smart about the Puritans. We think of John Bunyan in a famous passage of self-revelation: "When I was but a child of nine or ten years old, these things did so distress my soul, that in the midst of my merry sports and childish vanities amidst my vain companions, I was often much cast down and afflicted in my mind therewith. Yet I could not let go my sins."

The sins were a love of hockey and dancing on the village green! What a picture to hold before a modern audience of adolescents, for instance! Frankly, it is not very encouraging. We are still living in the "village-sceptic" age, an age characterized by Bliss Perry's story of the shoemaker who trained his dog to bark angrily when the Methodist church bell rang. But the truth of Puritanism is that it was a daring adventure in sincerity of life, purity of thought and word, integrity of social conduct and the expansion of the intellect. It was a creative attempt in its day to bear an adequate witness to Christ and thereby to redeem a decadent social order from final collapse. What is important is that we deliver a similarly effective influence in our day though the outward manifestations be different. How good a Puritan Jesus would have made is debatable. Certain it is though that the Puritans made exceptionally good Christians.

How then can we be adequate witnesses to Christ? Along what specific lines will our testimony run? What are the timely issues that need courageous lives for their vindication?

II

We bear our testimony first of all when we exhibit in our characters and careers a love that operates. Paul's faith that "all things work together for good to them that love" is perhaps the only adequate faith for the modern world. "The universe is on the side of the loving will" but we have been placing more trust

in the cunning intellect. We have abstained from the practice of good will, especially corporate good will, almost as if it were a cause for public scandal. The French, we are told, refuse to eat the luscious blackberries which grow so abundantly in their land because, they say, "they give us the fever." Some ancient taboo inhibits an attempt to investigate the grounds for their refusal. That the Americans eat blackberries with comfort does not change the habit of the French. Does a similar taboo inhibit the practice of corporate good will among us?

True, personal benevolence has increased rapidly among us; men and women, especially very rich men and women, compete for honors in extravagant gifts to charitable and educational institutions. How frequently the personal benevolence is joined in the same man's life to corporate brutality! We "sin by syndicate" while we love in a petty private way. It is loving, and so saving, by syndicate that we must have if a world of good will is to be more than a pious wish. If we are to be His witnesses we will have to bear Him testimony, not as a private diversion but in our public careers. Such progress as we have made toward a world of good will has been made because He has not been left without witnesses.

The redemption of modern life must be a redemption of our institutions as much as of our souls. A world which is at the same time a personal paradise and an institutional hell is unthinkable. Education, industry, politics and religion need to be captured for Christianity if we are to have a Christian world order. Our

institutions must be impregnated with the good will of Christ. It is at this point that our testimony must be registered. Consider what that may mean. Can you imagine a board of bank directors pausing in their deliberation and asking themselves, "Is this thing that we are about to decide going to promote the Kingdom of God?" Or what of a band of politicians? or a conference of international statesmen? or the regular meeting of the directors of a great industry? Unheard of! But it must be heard of. It must be done lest we be arrant hypocrites when we insist on a message of good will, a gospel of love, from the pulpit Sunday after Sunday. The hour has struck for a dramatization in our corporate life of the loving will of Christ. It may require heroism of a very high order, moral heroism, to give it reality but nothing less is demanded of us by Him who confidently counts on us to be His witnesses. Alongside it the physical heroism of the patriot and the martyr may well seem like a small thing.

The thing has been done. Great souls there have been who have reckoned honestly with the implication of their discipleship. Only recently one such died. He was a powerful man of business who upon coming into his place of power announced quite simply that he meant to conduct his business in strict harmony with the ethics of Jesus. He carried through his intention. When he died the Atlanta "Constitution," one of our leading papers, said he was a man of "very unique business methods." That which is to-day unique will to-morrow be the customary practice as we become His witnesses. Upon the occasional personality who has

imagination and moral courage enough to dramatize good will the future will turn as upon an axis. It is good will made concrete that preaches most effectively. It is love incarnate that is redemptive.

III

The adequate witness will find it necessary, I am certain, to join to high intellect, high purpose. The suggestion is trite enough; the fact is not so common. The sharpened intellect has not infrequently become a death-dealing weapon rather than a health-bringing force. Education has been again and again, a lamb-skin thrown over a spirit of barbarism within. That is a dangerous alliance indeed, the alliance of man's half-savage impulses with his growing scientific knowledge. "Perhaps the greatest tragedy of our age," Professor J. B. S. Haldane of Cambridge assures us, "is the misapplication of science. It is notorious that the principal result of many increases in human power and knowledge has been either an improvement in methods of destroying human life and property or an accentuation of economic inequality." I am not in the midst of a tirade on modern science! What stands out is that new crimes against humanity are again being committed because men have divorced intellect from conscience, power from high purpose. How pathetic are those words of Emerson in his famous Cooper Union Speech, "If his (Webster's) moral sensibility had been proportioned to the force of his understanding

what limits could have been set to his genius and beneficent power." What was true of one spectacular person several generations ago we are told is threatening to become the general character of modern men and women.

It is easy, and therefore dangerous, to generalize on a few spectacular examples. Nevertheless, we have been struck by the prevalence of crime, in many instances ghastly crime, committed by persons of rare mental accomplishment. Clutton Brock suggested several years ago that we have all espoused low views of life. Those who become enmeshed in great wrongdoing are the ones who have been overcome by the poison. We are all living in that same poisoned environment. We who are whole have been immunized by high purpose. It is a general diffusion of high purpose that we want above all things; men and women who are dedicated to social helpfulness; who will by the very skill acquired use their lives as standing points from which to exercise a constructive moral influence!

We have been painting the face of civilization with our deceptive mental cosmetics to make it look better than it is. We have simulated the appearance of a health we do not have. Our deception stands revealed, our face is washed white and pale in the storm of an unredeemed world. Our lives have pointed men nowhere. Certainly not to One who died that men might be free to live a happy, healthy moral life, unafraid of God and safe from the pollution of wrong. We have not been witnesses to Him. We have not seriously considered that as part of our task in life. When we come

to consider it we will find it necessary to adopt the stern and unbending way of high purpose to give our lives meaning and to bring our world help.

IV

The adequate witness will demonstrate the satisfaction that comes from persistent loyalty to the One who is both supreme in the moral realm and stands to-day as the one hope of the race. The fundamental craving of every one is for satisfaction, all our striving and vexation of spirit, all our effort, is an attempt to achieve a satisfactory life. The saint and the sensualist, the banker and the gambler, the scholar and the sport are all after the same thing, satisfaction. The adequate witness demonstrates the source of supreme satisfaction as loyalty to Christ, the ethical Christ of the Gospels.

Jesus' avowed aim was to bring satisfaction to every one that would come to Him. "I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly." There is deep pathos in the question spoken when the many were turning from Him, "Will ye also go away?" Has the Christian life broken down at just the point where its validity must be vindicated, the power to give satisfaction? The disciples answered "To whom else shall we turn?" A passion torn world is asking just that question. We, if we are adequate witnesses, must by our lives of persistent loyalty have the answer ready.

The modern man and woman is out for a satisfactory

life. That is the meaning of all these disturbing capers of the younger generation. And what of the curious antics of the older generation? "We want reality," we say. We search for it by following our instincts. We live natural lives, or pretend to, because we get a thrill out of it. For, of course, an instinct has the power to give us a thrill. War thrills; it ministers to the instinct of pugnacity. Gain thrills; it ministers to the acquisitive instinct. Lust thrills; it ministers to the sex instinct. So we set up our modern pantheon of false gods, the instincts, and go through our ritual of worship. The painted face, the gaudy dress, the weird dance, what are they but items in the ceremony and ritual of our modern paganism? All the time we are deluding ourselves with the notion that "having fun is the same thing as being happy." We are sinking, as Augustine, who tried the same ceremony, said, "by the weight of our own pride."

But the great emotions follow the persistent loyalties. The thrill that lasts, for the instincts give us only a temporary thrill which is always followed by deep depression, comes from a source deeper than instinct, the will to loyalty. Permanent ecstasy is joined to the consecrated life. The most signal service we can render our very impressionable age is the example of a persistently loyal life. Just as Samuel Johnson answered the clever jests of Voltaire by going weekly to St. Clement Danes to worship so we must answer our modern frivolity by quietly holding to the ethical Christ. It is the service our age needs, a demonstration of the satisfaction that loyalty can bring. When

Samuel Butler said that the best way to break down morality and bring in an age in which free love and intemperance are easy is to "be a moderate churchman" he gave away the secret how to bring in an age in which redemptive love and self-control are easy, namely, by being enthusiastic Christians.

V

The adequate witness maintains a steadfast and unwavering faith in the salvability of mankind. He will not yield to the temptation to say "What's the use?" Christ has significance to him, not alone because God's forgiving and benevolent will toward man stands revealed in Him but also because He satisfies a definite spiritual yearning in man. Just as the scientist discovers the remarkable secrets of nature because humanity has need of them so the adequate witness believes that Christ came because man has need of Him. This need is definitely in the consciousness of modern man. The adequate witness heightens the sense of that need by his firm belief in the capacity of the race to respond to Christ.

Nothing can be more important in our modern world than just that kind of faith. Jesus' deeds of mercy while on earth were always conditioned upon faith. Where men did not believe he could not do mighty works. It is so to-day. The demonstration of the power of the Christian movement is conditioned by our faith, not so much in its power as in the respon-

siveness of mankind to its appeal. Throughout the world run sinister forces with the evil tidings of pessimism. They spread the propaganda of despair, the despair of humanity. The militarists of every country, and every country unfortunately has so many of them, are spreading a subtle and beguiling suspicion of the people of every other country. Our statesmen are afflicted with what has been called "an official pessimism." Men and women, it is implied, will not respond to good will, love, and forgiveness. The men and women of the churches, be it said to their discredit, have yielded to this malady. We rally to the ill omen of the gleaming sword while we shake our heads over the good news of the Gospel. True, we believe the Gospel but we doubt people. Not so Jesus. Hear Him in John's Gospel, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Consider the rebuke to the pious doubters of his day when he challenged them with the sharp phrase, "Remember the sign of the prophet Jonah." The sign, namely, that a frivolous and decaying civilization will respond if there be found one man who will be steadfast with his message. "A nation can be changed in a generation," says the sociologist. The adequate witness believes it and imparts the contagion of his faith to others. He holds an attitude of expectancy toward God and man. With the Apostle Paul he sees the whole creation groaning and travailing for the revealing of the sons of God. He believes that just as the industrial revolution changed completely our whole life, physical, social and spiritual, so a new Christian revolution can change our modern world

and mold it "nearer to the heart's desire." He knows it can be done because he believes that men and women will respond to Christ when He is once again given the preëminence. That faith goes far toward achieving the desired end.

VI

These are the general lines along which it seems necessary that our testimony run. How specifically each one can be a witness must be determined by that one. A measure of social imagination together with a dash of enthusiasm will settle that. What needs perhaps to be pointed out is the startling ease with which we set aside the whole matter. We perhaps nourish the ancient delusion that God will manifest Himself in some spectacular way and save us; or that Jesus will suddenly appear on the clouds at a given time to snatch us out of our difficulty. We give way to the vain and languid hope that a supernatural substitute for human effort will be given us. Remember that the cloud received Him out of their sight. We must now be His witnesses. A modernized apocalypticism offers no salvation to a civilization that is running down.

The obvious place to begin is where we find ourselves. It may be a place of obscurity and insignificance. We must be as heroic as we can be in that place, remembering Maeterlinck's counsel that "deeds of heroism are only offered to those who have been for many years heroes in obscurity and silence."

IV

SIN AND THE MODERN MAN

St. Matthew 15: 19 *"Out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man."*

JESUS leaves us in no doubt about the seat of sin in our lives. "Out of the heart" or, as we would say, the imagination, come the things which defile the man. The evil growth of sin draws its sustaining life from deep within; its roots penetrate the rich imagery of the man.

Nathaniel Hawthorne in one of his "Twice-told Tales" has a story of an old man, comfortably seated in a deep luxurious arm-chair, with a bottle of generous Madeira wine before him with which to warm his aged blood. He was set to enjoy a quiet hour by himself. Three figures visited him. "These were Fancy, who had assumed the garb and aspect of an itinerant show-man, with a box of pictures on her back; and Memory in the likeness of a clerk, with a pen behind her ear, an inkhorn at her buttonhole and a huge manuscript volume beneath her arm; and lastly, behind the other two, a person shrouded in a dusky mantle which concealed both face and form." It was Conscience. Fancy proceeded to show her pictures to the old man.

They were in turn pictures of adultery, murder and the brutal robbing of orphaned children. In each picture the old man could distinguish himself as the central figure. He protested. Then Memory turned the leaves of her volume only to come upon a record which plainly told of the heart preparation for just that kind of deed. And Conscience unveiling her face smote her dagger to his heart. Though a record of sinful thought that was never embodied in an act the old man felt the venom of the dagger of Conscience. His heart seemed to fester with it. It is the novelist's way of presenting Jesus' view of sin in our lives.

I

The world we live in concerns itself very little about sin. "What does M. Renan make of sin?" wrote Amiel. "I think I leave it out," was Renan's reply. We have been doing just that, leaving sin out.

It seems as though the very office of religion were being used to make us comfortable in a state of indifference to the fact of sin in life. How much prayer, for instance, is one long struggle to make wrong things seem right? We seek to win the approval of the Almighty for our selfish schemes. How much worship is a bit of "protective mimicry of the good" to cover our otherwise godless conduct? There is a Russian story that stands written in "Painted Windows" which tells of a man who set out to murder an old woman in order to rob her. As he tramped through

the snow he suddenly remembered that it is a saint's day. With the hatchet in his blouse and the cruelty and greed in his heart he dropped on his knees instantly. He crossed himself violently as he implored God to forgive him his evil intention. He rose, "refreshed and forgiven," postponing the murder till the next night. How much charity covers a "multitude of sins" as we love to read! We are still religious. We can't help that. "I may be the greatest humbug out," says one of Hugh Walpole's characters in "The Captives," "but I'm religious. Religion is like 'aving a 'are-lip, once you've got it you'll be bothered with it all your life." Being bothered with it we are making the dangerous experiment of subverting it to our own ends, using it in a guilty effort to reënforce our willful indifference to sin in our lives.

For there are signs of sin in modern life. The whole countenance of modern civilization bears unmistakable signs of sinful living. Not only has carnal corruption left its tracings but there is a definite sign of general moral impotence that is alarming. "The characteristic feature of our time," writes an English psychologist, "is a certain pathetic moral impotence. There is no lack of good will and aspiration but there is little effective driving power. Very little, as we say, 'gets done.' " We lack the will that is victorious. Something has gone wrong within. We love the good, we intend the fine, we aspire to the noble but we achieve next to nothing. Individually and collectively, we are full of emotional goodness, practically none of which gets itself expressed in good deeds or noble char-

acters. "I can be good if I will," says Bishop Temple, "but I won't." The apostle Paul read in such impotence of will a clear sign of sin. "To will is present with me but to do that which is good is not. For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practice." The modern world shows enough symptoms of that inner indifference, that paralysis of will, combined with a fine emotional leaning to goodness, to convince one that it is deeply smitten by sin. Wherefore we need to concern ourselves more sedulously about our sin.

II

But why should I concern myself about my sin? Why should I try to acquire a sense of guilt? "The higher man of to-day," Sir Oliver Lodge tells us, "is not worrying about his sins, much less about their punishment; his mission, if he is good for anything, is to be up and doing." The analysis is undoubtedly correct. The modern man is not worrying about his sins. But he ought to be worrying about them just because he is not up and doing. He is not up and doing, and indeed can't be, because of his sin. Sin has inhibited his capacity to be "up and doing." The modern man ought be worrying about his sins just as a languid, tired, blundering person ought be worried about his health. For the modern man is a morally languid, tired, blundering person. He shows all the signs of moral exhaustion; exhaustion due to a foreign

growth in his character which is drawing off his moral energy.

We need to worry about our sins then first of all to become aware of our own spiritual state. This subjective sense of exceptional well-being that afflicts us moderns is not a sign of moral health. A certain form of pulmonary tuberculosis induces, through the germs of the disease, in the patient a subjective sense of energy and well-being. But the doctor is not deceived. He knows that the end is near when the sense of energy is strongest. Had one asked Cicero about the prospect of endurance of the Roman Empire he undoubtedly would have lapsed into superlatives in his reply. He would have pointed to its necessity to business, to its exceptional activity in every part of the world, to its rare efficiency and its far-flung legions. Yet Cicero lived on the eve of its collapse. Individually and collectively, the modern man has a vital reason for being concerned about his sins. Sheer self-preservation ought to prompt him to a very sharp self-scrutiny. There are poisons, we are told, that throw their victim into the greatest ecstasy, that make him unduly hilarious, just before they bring upon him the death agony. Sin has a like effect; especially the sins of luxury, brutality and oppression, the major sins of modern times.

The modern man ought to worry about his sins, not because of the punishment he may be laying up for himself, but because of the harm he may be doing by being just himself. John Masefield in "The Everlasting Mercy" draws a picture of a man who is wholly given to sin. Saul Kane does not regard himself a sinner,

of course, and therefore joins himself to company wherever it is to be had. He is found on a given occasion in the company of a lad when the lad's mother comes upon them. The mother protests severely that he, Saul Kane, should be in the presence of her boy. Says Kane,

> "But this old mother made me see
> The harm I done by being me."

In Goethe's great drama "Faust" there is a scene of Faust and Mephistopheles in Margaret's room. They have gone there to plot their malicious scheme. Just after they have left Margaret enters the room.

> "How sultry 'tis,"

she exclaims. She opens the window, only to find that the air is not really sultry without.

> "There runs a shudder through my frame."

It is the effect of the presence of Mephistopheles.

How often there is packed up within these characters of ours, with our fine scorn for the excellent and our guilty worship of the material rewards of life, characters which bear the label "good," "successful," "prominent citizen," that which is rank moral poison and which will surely slay any young man or woman who consumes it in fellowship. We go about like tainted selves! The modern man needs to worry about his sins because of the harm he may be doing by being just himself. With that fine precision Ibsen traces the

cruelty and horror of sin in the disasters inflicted upon the innocent, especially upon posterity! This is the deadliness of sin!

III

For centuries it was the fashion to define and classify the sins of humanity. Frequently the definition was so framed as to leave out the very sin that was most besetting. We see the mote in our brother's eye, remaining, meanwhile, stupidly unconscious of the huge beam in our own eye. The spectrum shows only colors of the substances that are not present in the object upon which it is trained. The elements present leave only a dark line. We are all too repentant of our neighbor's sins, thanking God that we are not as other people, extortioners, adulterers, unjust, "or even as this publican." The assumption on which Paul operated before his conversion was that his life was the norm. He had not known sin until he redefined it so as to include his own kind of life, until he examined himself from an external viewpoint, as it were. Out of the heart come the forces that make us sinful. Sin is not then so much a specific act which can be isolated, described, defined and cried about, as it is a general state of the heart, or, as we would say, an inner attitude of the mind. For the seven deadly sins of the middle ages, pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, gluttony and sensuality, we may well put St. Paul's "impotence of will for any good thing" as a general definition of sin. Augustine found that the peculiarity of sin was

that it left the will free to command the body only to be incapable of commanding itself. Such is the subtlety of sin, giving us freedom to do everything, but the right, the good, the true.

Sin in the modern world cannot then be named in a few outstanding and spectacular iniquities. Its main effect is traceable in a general coarsening of character. Our taste for the fine is gone. Our literature, our music, our code of daily living, all bear unmistakable signs of a deep seated coarseness in our character. We have an emotional leaning to the good, the beautiful and the true but sin has sharpened our taste for the coarse, the sensual and the vain. The confessions of Augustine record a prayer of his young manhood. "Give me chastity and continency, only not yet." Later he adds, "I feared lest Thou shouldest hear me soon, and soon cure me of the disease of concupiscence, which I wished to have satisfied rather than extinguished." The prayer is very modern!

Loose habits have developed a taste for looseness. That is the worst consequence of our post-war conduct. What we did in a moment of relaxed vigilance has developed within us a definite taste for the coarse and the vulgar. The young man who took his first glass of strong drink in his mother's home where it was served as an interesting and diverting experience, just because it was unlawful, it had never been served in the home before, is to-day damned with an unconquerable taste for it. His character is definitely coarsened, perhaps permanently. The young woman who suffers early sophistication through the plays and novels

of the modern world gains "a cheap initiation into certain abnormalities of artificial society" but she also is given "a willful misunderstanding of the scale of values" of life, as Bliss Perry has pointed out; she too develops a damning incompetence to appreciate and achieve the lovely and the fine. Her character too is coarsened. "When Mr. Kipling, many years ago," to quote Professor Perry again, "published his 'The Light that Failed,' Mr. Barrie, then a young journalist, made this shrewd comment upon Dick Heldar, Mr. Kipling's hero: 'This man is under the curse of thinking that because he has knocked about the world in shady company he has no more to learn. It never dawns upon him that he is but a beginner in knowledge of life compared to many men who have stayed at home with their mothers.' I do not know more exact phrases than Mr. Barrie's in which to describe the spirit of the plays and novels from which many undergraduates are now getting their notions of what they call 'real life.' "

The prophet Ezekiel has given us a series of startling pictures of his vision of abominations in Jerusalem. Among them is one that shows Ezekiel digging his way through a hole in the wall to a secret chamber in the temple. "So I went in and saw: and behold, every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about." His spirit guide addresses the prophet: "Son of man hast thou seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in his chambers of imagery? for they say Jehovah seeth us

not." The modern psychologist readily verifies the prophet's account of the inner degradation that sin works. "Turn over a stone in the field," writes John Burroughs, "and behold the consternation among the small folk beneath it—ants, slugs, bugs, worms, spiders —all objecting to the full light of day." It is an account of the mind of a modern man where sin has been at work. "Out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man." Or again, "keep the heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

IV

There is a way of being worldly without being gross. When Paul wrote the sad line, "Demas forsook me having loved this present world," he did not suggest that Demas was guilty of gross, carnal sin. He had held daily dalliance with the trifling delights of the sensuous world; he had, in imagination at least, given himself to the tangible prizes of life. He was worldly. "Thus with the baggage of this present world," says Augustine, "was I held down pleasantly as in sleep." The main line of sin in modern life is just such dalliance with the delights of the sensuous world, just such worldliness. We live like decadent Roman emperors with their excess of splendor, softness and opulence. The luxury itself, though it verge on carnal degradation, is not so damning in the immediate physical consequence as in the incidental moral consequences.

Samuel Johnson thought that the sensuous delights, the rich luxuries of life are the things that make death terrible. We know that they are the things that make life futile.

They make life futile because trifles get exalted into matters of consequence. William Watson has worked this out with telling effect in a stanza from his poem "The Things that are More Excellent":

> "To dress, to call, to dine, to break
> No canon of the social code,
> The little laws that lacqueys make,
> The futile decalogue of mode,
> How many a soul for these things lives
> With pious passion, grave intent
> While nature careless-handed gives
> The things that are more excellent."

And so we go about with our lacquey-minds and futile decalogues wholly unequal to the tasks of modern life, incapable, because preoccupied by the trifling things of life, of appreciating our moral tasks or conceiving and seeing through any definite moral design. Jesus tried to lay bare this subtle strategy of sin in his parable of the great feast. Each one invited made excuse on the ground of preoccupation with, either a field, a yoke of oxen or a wife, i.e., with the tangible prizes of life. And so the kingdom of an achieved righteousness, the realization of triumphant love, the appreciation of serenity and peace is daily slipping from us because we are "laying waste our powers" and are giving "our souls away."

Here we face a very intimate personal problem. The

real temptation is not usually one that would take us into gross carnal wrong-doing but this much more subtle and beguiling suggestion to regale ourselves in the joys of living and not vex ourselves overmuch about the things that are more excellent. Edwin Arlington Robinson in his poem "The Man Who Died Twice" recounts the story of a talented young man who had a great gift for music; but he sinned against his gift; he permitted the worldly delights to draw him. Lust and drunkenness follow. In a delirium Fernando Nash once more hears the call of his gift. He tries to respond but alas he has only enough left in him to beat a Salvation Army drum. The man is dead. Futility is his death. From that death there is no resurrection; for that sin there is no redemption. It is the sin against the Holy Ghost. His physical death later is an unimportant event. One wonders whether sin in our modern world is not dealing out exactly that kind of death; whether we are not actually facing a colossal temptation to sin against the Holy Ghost. For such a sin no modern Dante can conceivably furnish us a purgatory where we can work out our salvation. Even Jesus, who never despaired of mankind, said that the sin against the Holy Ghost cannot be forgiven.

Beware then the worldliness which calls not to gross carnal iniquity but to the neglect of our God-given purpose for the delights of the time! To Paul's warning "flee youthful lusts" must be added "conquer mature temptations," for worldliness is peculiarly a temptation that besets maturity, that time in life when our idealisms naturally tend to fade out, when the accumulated re-

sources of life make physical pleasures so possible, when the period of moral sag sets in. Beware the temptation to take that "moral holiday" of which William James wrote, a holiday from which few return to the main business of life.

V

The New Testament never speaks of sin but it speaks of the remedy for it at the same time. It never preaches guilt but it preaches salvation too. In St. Paul's classic chapter on sin, the seventh of Romans, he points out the twofold effect of sin upon him. He was duped and he was enslaved; he was blind to his condition and powerless to change it. Through the centuries the testimony of honest men and women coincides with that of Paul. What is the way out? How can we, in this constant struggle of flesh with spirit, gain the prize of spiritual victory, peace and joy?

His true state was brought home to Paul through an external standard, the law. "I had not known sin except through the law." Augustine too was moved to redemptive contrition when he saw the simple and the ignorant achieve a purity that was beyond him. He turned upon his friend Alypius: "What ails us? The unlearned start up and take heaven by force, and we with our learning and without heart, lo, where we wallow in flesh and blood." Brilliant powerlessness knows its guilt and impotence when it looks upon simple purity and victorious virtue. Let the modern man examine

himself in the light of Christ, our external standard. Let him judge what is right not by his own standard, sin has lowered that, but by the standard of that One "who can never be surpassed." How biting the sarcasm of Jesus when he turns upon his hecklers, "Why judge ye not of yourselves that which is right?" The implication of course is that in the midst of sleek complacency with self-made second-best standards there yet come moments of grave suspicion that we are not as right and good as we pretend to be. We seek an external standard. The modern man, to retain any shred of moral honesty, must sooner or later cast his life alongside the standard of excellence as it is in Christ Jesus. What moments of bitter humiliation, deep, inner humiliation, will follow such a test! What prayer of shame at our own brilliant impotence! "Wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" Who has not experienced that knows very little of life indeed!

But the modern man needs more than a standard. The very authenticity and excellence of a lofty external standard is depressing to one who understands his sunken state and shrunken power. What good is it asking me to be like Christ in the very moment when I have come upon my unlikeness to Him, and more particularly, my powerlessness to be like Him. What is the message of the Gospel to a world of sin? The story of a great example? No, the revelation of a great redemption. "I thank God through Jesus Christ," cries the helpless, convicted Paul. Because "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." We have not done

with sin until we experience that reconciliation. Sin unforgiven has a curious power of generation. Sin dealt with at the foot of the Cross is sin done with. It passes out of life and leaves us free and fit for the achievement of "the good that we would."

Who that has seen the Christ hung on his cross, struggling with sin, seeming to lose yet winning the redemptive conviction for all mankind that God is love and forgiveness, that the sinner alienated may become the son restored, who that has seen Him dying that men might be convicted and empowered, can any longer dally with the deceptive delights of sin. Explain it as we may the sinner finds new life at the foot of the Cross. Something happens within that makes us able. As the years go on we may learn to say again with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

V

HOW JESUS HELPS US IN TEMPTATION

Hebrews 4:15 *"For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin."*

WORDS such as these would be a shocking blasphemy were they to appear in another place. They stand in sacred writ. They are hallowed by the sanctity of the truth they convey. Jesus was "tempted in all points like as we are." Let us not blink the fact. He knew at what cost in self-discipline and struggle one comes to self-mastery. Any doctrine of His divinity that robs Him of His rich humanity is a reversion to an ancient heresy and a perversion of an eternal truth. The writer to the Hebrews is quite certain on that point.

To be tempted is not a sign of moral depravity. Two people are never tempted; the hardened sinner and the complacent Pharisee. The one is confirmed in evil, the other is convinced of his goodness. Both are moral corpses. Temptation is a sign of moral aliveness. Temptation is the signal to rally the moral reserves to the defense when the citadel of the soul is attacked. There is a certain moral necessity in temptation.

"When the fight begins within himself
A man's worth something . . ."

Where do our temptations come from? Whence these strange and complex crises which so try men's souls? The sources of temptation are legion. Only one with an expert knowledge of psychology combined with the poetic insight of genius could adequately catalogue the manifold facts of life from which our temptations emerge. A few of them are common enough.

I

Our temptations spring from a curious mixture of evil intention, past meanness, complacency, and pride. They are of our own manufacture more often than we care to admit. Our past sins fight, through temptation, to retain their mastery over us. To cultivate the art of wrong-doing is to bring into play a series of habits whose hold on character grows with the passing years. No amount of moral resolution can set aside the claims these habits make on us without a stiff fight. Thus do we come upon one of the most common sources of temptation. How much "seeming unreality of the spiritual life," for instance, is traceable directly to a guilty neglect of the things of the spirit, as Dr. King has so accurately suggested. The habit of neglect has thwarted the will to know. There came a day when the Psalmist "remembered God and was troubled." The service of the living God is made more difficult when

one has bowed the knee in the house of Rimmon. Small wonder that the aged King Lear, an adept in grossness, commands the druggist to give him an effective potion to "sweeten the imagination."

Our past goodness is a singularly discouraging source of temptation. No greater drag is laid on moral resolution than a perfectly legitimate knowledge of past goodness. Familiarity with evil dulls the conscience and deadens the will. That we know. But does not familiarity, too great an intimacy with goodness, do exactly the same thing? Why should we strive? Have we not won our laurels? Have we not borne the burden and heat of the day? Is it not enough? Can it be that Jesus rebuked the rich young ruler when he called him "good" because the Master feared this temptation to satisfaction with past accomplishment? "Why callest thou me good? There is none good save God only." Very truly has evil been described as "the backward pull of the lesser good." For to overcome our own past goodness is as much a task of the moral life as to overcome our past evil. Experience teaches us it is a more exacting task. A certain pride of self-respect takes possession of us when we have reached that place of moral self-mastery, when we have beaten our bodies under. We justly claim the rewards of virtue only to be reminded that

> "When we looked for crowns to fall
> We find the tug's to come—that's all;"

that respectability is not enough; that the moral ideal lays upon us a "pitilessly expanding moral task." We

can never let well enough alone. We must always "press on to the mark of the upward calling in Christ Jesus." To become "gospel-hardened," too familiar with the good, is a deadly snare laid for our unsuspecting selves.

And what of our imperious passions? They are part of the baggage of life and not always easily managed. "The passions," writes Hazlitt, "contract and warp the natural progress of life. They paralyze all of it that is not devoted to their tyranny and caprice. This makes the difference between the laughing innocence of childhood, the pleasantness of youth and the crabbedness of age." "Each man is tempted," says the Epistle of James, "when he is drawn away by his own lust." Take the sex instinct for instance. Julian Huxley has recently reminded us of the peculiar nature of the moral difficulty this instinct brings upon us. The sex instinct is a part of the complement of powers with which God has endowed us. In itself it is entirely noble. And yet its mismanagement has caused not only most of the misery of life but has spelled the doom of every civilization hitherto. That mismanagement is due chiefly to the fact that the sex function matures much earlier in our lives than our other mental functions. Its powers are developed before the mental power of man to correlate the various functions of life reaches full maturity. The sex instinct demands an experience before our powers to regulate that experience are expanded. Thus we have the temptations and problems of adolescence. The acquisitive instinct, which Jesus classified with the instinct of sex, as a power to work

mischief, comes upon us in much the same way. It surrounds the life with possessions before we have stability of character and the disposition to benevolence fully developed. Between them they compose the major difficulties of the moral life. This source of temptation is peculiarly potent in exactly the strongest nature, for obvious reasons.

Again, the satanic suggestion that came to Jesus in the wilderness reminds us of another source of temptation. The suggestion pressed upon the Christ was that He had the power to turn stones into bread or to fling Himself from the pinnacle of the temple and rise unharmed. Having the power, why not use it? How often

> "Sight of means to do ill deeds
> Makes ill deeds done."

It is for this reason chiefly that wealth, particularly in the control of the young, spreads such harm. It puts at one's disposal the means to do ill with a certain security against social chastisement. It draws off the vitality of moral idealism latent in youth and robs its proud possessor of courage to renounce self in the interest of a nobler life. To a degree we are all tempted to give in because we "can get away with it" as the saying of the street has it. Man's growing ingenuity and capacity is undoubtedly making clean moral living more difficult.

A fourth source of some of our most grievous temptations is the trysting place of our illicit companionships. It is a far cry indeed from the separatist tendency of

early Christian history to the imitative tendency of the present. In the early days a Christian kept to his own company; of two ancient worthies it was said, "When they were let go they went unto their own company." Roman society was avoided as a polluting stream of corruption. Friendships were found in the little and ever-enlarging circles of Christian disciples. So far as possible all manner of public intercourse with pagans was renounced. The theatre, the Coliseum, the games, the army and public office were hardly patronized by the Christians. Christian households such as the one described by Walter Pater in "Marius, the Epicurean" secured to those early followers of the Christ their friendships. This habit continued for several centuries. The part it contributed to the stability of the Christian movement and the strength of personal character remains to be computed. To-day the habit is different. A chain of companionships in business, amusement, politics and culture have completely enmeshed us. We do not test a man's character for its Christian morality before we take him across the threshold of our homes. Even the kingdom of heaven is like a net cast into the sea, which gathers in all kinds. In the world of our social relationships wheat and tares grow side by side. So it will be to the day of judgment. Thus there have come into every life those evil communications which still corrupt good manners. Quite aside from the "confederacies of vice" that we guiltily and deliberately enter upon we are beset with illicit companionships that make trial of our faith and morals day by day.

A very distressing source of temptation is the loose-

ness of the social code. The conventional standard is always easy. It makes no exactions. It applauds what the morally enlightened condemn. It trims to our weaknesses whereas conscience rebukes them. Whites and blacks turn to gray in the conventional code. It petrifies the feeling for the right into a cold calculation of the proper. It resents moral excellence as much as moral indigence. It hurls mud at him who rises above the social standard as readily as it does at him who falls below it. It discourages moral well-doing as severely as it scorns indulgence. It crucifies Christ at the same time that it casts out Judas. Here is a temptation hard to overcome. Every impulse to be friendly, loyal and agreeable militates against the passion to excel. "The artist," says Schiller, "is the son of his age; but pity him if he is its pupil, or even its favorite!" It might as well be said of the Christian. Difficult as it always is we must fight the deadening influence of the social conventions as we would the ravaging progress of disease. For it is a disease attacking the vitals of character.

With these abundant sources of temptation before us the question at once springs to our minds "How can we overcome?" By what strategy can we meet these subtle wiles of the tempter? What defense can we erect against the aggressive onslaughts of evil often robed in the mantle of goodness? We meet the foe not by a petty contentment to win individual battles but by the strategy of a counter campaign. Battles may be lost. If we prosecute a general campaign we will win

not only individual battles but the victory of a vindicated character.

II

In any general campaign for right living the first essential is to have a dominant purpose. Against the odds of life a fixed purpose is the only sure prophecy of final conquest. It is the cohesive force which unifies and holds together the sum total of personal life forces. Turning to Schiller again we hear him saying, "But how is the artist to guard himself from the corruption of his time, which on every side assails him? By despising its decisions. Let him look upwards to his dignity and his mission. Not downwards to his happiness and his wants." Evil desires perish for want of interest when the attention is held by a dominating purpose of beneficence and social usefulness. Timidity, such a fertile field of failure in the face of moral difficulty, vanishes when we are mastered by a great ambition. The critic writes of Whittier, "frail of body, poor, timid, untaught, he had discovered, on reading Burns, that he too had a poet's soul. He learned from William Lloyd Garrison the secret of losing one's life and saving it, so that in becoming, in his own words 'a man and not a mere verse maker' he found in that surrender to the claims of humanity, the inspiration which transformed him into a poet." What can rouse the dormant capacities for great living so quickly as a dominant purpose? Under its commanding influence the dumb speak, the weak become strong and the morally lame walk. It

takes a Grant, the victim of laziness and drink, and transforms him into a hardened campaigner for victory, who will "fight it out on this line if it takes all summer." It so softens his soul that he pushes that victory on to peace and magnanimity. It endows the life with a conquering earnestness. Happy the young man or woman who early in life comes under the spell of a dominant purpose and permits life to be swayed by the commanding eloquence of that purpose. Many, if not most of the temptations are scattered in utter rout by that strategy. Jesus, by one of those homely figures that became majestic at his touch, insists that "he who putteth his hand to the plow and looketh back is not fit for the Kingdom of God." By which He means to say that a mastering purpose claiming the undivided attention of the life is the only sure way to bring us to the Kingdom of God. It is they

"Who want while through blank life they dream along
Sense to be right and passion to be wrong"

that can't be placed in the Kingdom of an achieved satisfaction.

That purpose need not be specifically religious. It need not take one out of the secular, so-called, into the sacred pursuits of life. We are coming to realize that majestic souls whether saints or savants, prophets or politicians, men of God or men of business, have a sense of mission. "They act at times as if they knew," says Hugo. They hold to an end, see a goal, pursue an ideal. So intent are they that they will not be diverted. A purpose dominates them. By that purpose are they kept as by a protecting providence.

III

Next to a dominant purpose a dominant cause, a mastering movement, contributes much to our mastery of self. How many of us who find ourselves incapable of conceiving and carrying through a dominant purpose are yet able to lose ourselves with deliberation in some great cause set for us by a Christ-like personality? In another day it was the cause of abolition; more recently it was the cause of temperance; to-day it is the cause of world peace that pleads for our service and allegiance. Minor causes beckon us constantly. A person must be very dull indeed if he cannot find some worthy work of social helpfulness in his community which deserves his loyalty. To espouse a cause is to be a marked man. A certain repute for virtue attaches to one forthwith. Our characters are advertised, as it were. We must therefore live up to our repute. We are at once resolved not to yield to any wrong that will unman us for our cause. Even Jesus cried out to the Father, "for their sakes I sanctify myself." To live for a movement means to keep oneself fit for it. To wear the uniform of the consecrated is to make consecration easier. To carry the badge of virtue is often a charm against the allurements of vice. To march under the banner of righteousness withdraws us from the by-paths of unrighteousness. To lose our lives in a great mission is to find them in a great redemption. The mere surrounding of an environment that is friendly stimulates the growth of the good impulses. It is a positive way of meeting the issue of temptation. When you are

"Giving your body with a man-size will
To every deed
Doing each baneful task as though to fill
Your spirit's need"

moral questions bring with them their own answers. Nothing that thwarts us in the fulfilment of our cause can be permitted. The simple shaft that honors Horace Mann bears the inscription that at once reveals his power and interprets his life: "Be ashamed to die until you have won some great victory for humanity." When the winning of that victory dominates us temptation of any kind has little power over us. Truly to such "the Prince of this world cometh" but he hath nothing in us.

One deeply suspects that much of our modern laxity in personal morality is due directly to the popular, if not official, renunciation of ideals that our country has made since the war. The statement is of course open to question. But whence this pride in loose living, this cynical indifference to great social wrong-doing if not from a slow-working yet deadly disbelief in great causes, mastering ideals, profound convictions, that has come over us? One is impressed with the mental precocity of our young writers, to what end? Futility! Genius in every sphere seems bound to the wheel of futility if not that of avarice. Can it be that "a diffidence in the soul is creeping over the mind of this great sensual, avaricious America" of ours? What can redeem us but a return to the principles that made us great? Our past history is a record of great causes taken up by men and women mostly of small conse-

quence. Out of that came a national discipline that reached down into the life of the commonest man and woman. Out of that discipline came characters for the world to marvel at, Lincoln, Garrison, and the rest. Would any of them have reached great heights except by enlisting in a great cause? Give yourself to a great cause. It not only redeems life from insignificance and a crushing sense of futility but it reduces the power of temptation to a point where it is not dangerous.

IV

It is certain though that the greatest help in the moment of temptation is a dominant friendship. The power of friendship has been many times retold. Gamaliel Bradford has written a group of biographies of recent Americans. Among them are the stories of the careers of two men differing in every way. They are Mark Twain and Robert E. Lee. His comment on the effect of these two lives upon him as he lived with them in his inner thought is revealing. "In going back to him (Mark Twain)," says Bradford, "to write this portrait, I found the same portentous, shadowing darkness stealing over me that he spread before. I lived for ten years with the soul of Robert E. Lee, and it really made a little better man of me. Six months of Mark Twain made a worse. I even caught his haunting exaggeration of profanity. And I am fifty-six years old and not very susceptible to infection. What can he not do to boys and girls of sixteen?" The importance to character of adequate friendships is put beyond dispute by testimony such as this.

What mother is there who has not warned her son against the making of wrong friendships? How often the story of a ruined life is the narrative of an evil companionship? More important even than the fleeing of these evil companionships is the making of helpful friendships. For their stabilizing effect cannot be overstated. The Sanhedrin understood the boldness of Peter and John when they learned that "they had been with Jesus." One sees during the winter-storms on the Seine all manner of small craft put to rout. They cannot ply the turbulent waters with safety to ship and cargo. They are beaten to destruction by the violence of the flood. Once in a while, however, there passes a craft, seemingly no sturdier than the rest, and yet it moves on in safety. The secret of course is in a great cable in the middle of the stream to which the ship is lashed. It keeps its course held firm by iron chains, the violence of the waters notwithstanding. Even so do dominant friendships give us the victory over our troublesome temptations. "Our chief want in life," says Emerson, "is somebody who shall make us do what we can. This is the service of a friend. With him we are easily great. There is a sublime attraction in him to whatever virtue is in us. How he flings wide the doors of existence! What questions we ask of him! What an understanding we have! How few words are needed!"

It is at this point that Jesus chiefly helps us in temptation. From Him we derive our dominant purpose; from Him springs the dominant cause that deserves our loyalty; in Him do we find what we most need, our

greatest friend. It is not a popular suggestion, the mystical friendship of Jesus, in an age of unscrupulous rationalizing. We have done, we say, with such medieval superstition. The only defense one has for pressing the suggestion is that when we have done with the mystical friendship of Jesus, His unseen companionship, we have done with historic Christianity. Take from the pages of history the names of the men and women who wrought a good work upon us, sustained by the one conviction that Jesus was with them, and you leave those pages bare indeed. The Saint of Assisi, the Reformer Luther, the astronomer Newton, the poet Wordsworth, the scientist Fabre, the humanitarian Howard, the statesman Lincoln, and his great forerunner Garrison, all these and many others would go. What a daring emasculation of the past it would be! One recalls the vivid lines of Macaulay, "A people that takes no pride in the noble achievements of remote ancestors will never achieve anything to be remembered with pride by remote posterity." These remote Christian ancestors of ours may yet possess the real secret of the victorious life.

The friendship of Jesus is more than a sentimental relationship. It is a moral compact. We are his friends if we do the things He commands. The desire to be His friends helps us to do those things. Moreover, what Christ asks us to do He has already done; what we are expected to endure has by Him been endured. For we have not a high Priest who legislates from his pontifical seat and his sheltered life for our infirmities of will and conscience. Our High Priest has not only been

touched with a feeling of our infirmities but He has been tempted exactly as we are. The very knowledge of His endurance stiffens our own resistance. Men have endured to the very cross and beyond under the moving knowledge that Jesus traveled the same path before them. To say less is to falsify fact.

Again, Jesus gives to the dictates of conscience the authority of personal experience. What we know we ought to do we are rallied to do when we contemplate the career of Christ. We are put in a mood to carry out the projects of our own conscience. It isn't only that Jesus has endured what we are asked to endure but what is much more important, that He believes in us. That very faith gives us strength. No more amazing situation presents itself in the pages of history than this faith of Christ in common men. Says Glover, "no other teacher dreamed that common men could possess a tenth part of the moral grandeur and spiritual power which Jesus elicited from them—chiefly by believing in them." Take the case of Peter. Christ knew the instability of the man. He even pointed out to him impending failure. And yet He kept on trusting him. He insisted that on him would depend the stabilizing of the apostolic band.

But you say that that is plausible enough when the commanding personality of Jesus is physically present. But how can Jesus help me who have not the benefit of the forceful personal presence? There is point to the question. Fortunately it is abundantly answered in history. What so impressed the wise and the great of antiquity was the greatness of character of simple

people. Galen, one of the first physicians, a scientist and a philosopher, a man whose authority was supreme in the realm of medicine to the middle of the sixteenth century, remarked upon this excellence of character in simple Christian people. He knew common people for what they were. The best of them were none too good. It was the very few, the aristocrats, that in that ancient day achieved excellence. Galen's own words were that only a philosopher was capable of moral goodness. And yet he was moved to write in extravagant language of the self-control, purity and glad devotion to a standard of virtue that surpassed the best of the philosophers, of these common Christian people. That was one hundred and fifty years after Christ. Under the dominance of this Master who believed in them and thought goodness and self-control possible for them, these men and women came to exactly that standard of life. What Shakespeare says of King Henry as he goes from regiment to regiment on the eve of the great conflict might well be said of Christ:

". . . Every wretch, pining and pale before,
Beholding him, plucks comfort from his looks
. . . . . .
A little touch of Harry in the night."

To say that we can't relate ourselves in a similarly vital way to the historic Christ, who is by that very token, the living Christ, is to pretend that we must fail where others have succeeded. Quite aside from any fantastic notions of mystical oneness with Him there remains the very substantial fact that real men and

women who cared about character have "plucked comfort" from His looks, the more so that the relationship was set up in the secret places of the heart. The final help then comes from a spiritual traffic carried on with the Master of life.

VI

THE VALUE OF THE GOOD LIFE

Romans 1:7 *"To all that are in Rome—called to be saints."*

ST. PAUL lived in a day of accumulating disasters. The golden age of Augustus had given way to the leaden age of Nero. Civilization was running down. Triumphant wrong was presiding over a social order reeking with moral corruption. Men and women were "receiving in themselves the recompense of their error which was due." The first chapter of Romans is a vivid portrayal of a doomed and dying social life.

Whether one accepts Oswald Spengler's verdict that the soul of western civilizaton is in full decay and that from now on the facts of our social life will be zoölogical incidents only, or not, there is a growing suspicion abroad that all is not well with us. Our wise men shake their heads as the newspapers headline new tales of wrong again in triumph. The health-loving spirit of youth is in open revolt against the moral diet served up by the elders. The literature of gloom is alarmingly abundant. The apostles of hope are strangely silent. Corruption in high places remains curiously uncondemned. Certainly these data of despair stimulate an alert study of St. Paul's approach to the solution of a

social situation which, if it be more pronounced is not wholly dissimilar from our present situation.

St. Paul is calling for the kind of people needed in a dying world, a world that has all the symptoms of moral exhaustion. He is making a blood test of civilization for the kind of character and competence needed for the restoration of hope and the renewal of life. One may well imagine Paul reviewing the past of the race. He calls up one by one the kind of men and women who held the high places of power, who won the self-renouncing, suffering, sacrificing loyalty of plain people only to be found incompetent, impotent, unworthy: only to leave a tangled, disordered and wrecked society. The politician and the prophet; the priest and the autocrat, these had in turn been tried and found wanting in character, intelligence, vision and high purpose. The mind of Paul settles on the saint, a new kind of person since Jesus Christ. Why not try the saint? Why not save a dying world by means of a living sainthood? The experiment is worth while. Paul calls for saints. "To all that are in Rome—called to be saints."

I

The word saint brings up curious ideas in the mind. It calls back an unsatisfying picture of a thin face, a spare and lean body, strange dress and a meditative manner of life. Underneath it all is written in bold letters the damning word "unreal." We remember Tennyson's poem-picture of Simon Stylites on his sixty-

foot pole. Frankly we are not encouraged to yield much hope to such a figure.

"Saint" was a common word in St. Paul's day. It meant simply "a good person." True, he was not a "goody good" person. The sickly figure of medieval art has really nothing in common with St. Paul's idea of the saint. The saint was an alive person. "Grand, rough old Martin Luther" was Browning's reaction to a saint. Of him at thirty-eight a contemporary wrote: "Eyes flashing and sparkling like a star so you could hardly stand their gaze! A friendly and accessible man! His earnestness was so mingled with joy and kindliness that it was a joy to live with him." Our mental prejudice against the saint needs revision very badly. Art, in the employ of priest-craft and politics, has given us a maliciously distorted picture of the saint.

Called to be saints, to be good people, that is St. Paul's hope for a dying world. The good life has redemptive power. A candidate for president of the United States was recently quoted as saying that he'd rather have the support of a certain Methodist camp-meeting than the backing of the smartest politicians. Wrong never wins except the good people are first given a moral anæsthetic of high-sounding political phrases. "If twelve such people could hold together for one ten-year," wrote Burne-Jones to Mary Gladstone, "they could change the face of the world. Twelve such men did hold together once and the face of the world was changed." A Savonarola in Florence, a Wesley in England, and a Garrison in America are bringers of renewal of social life and corporate health. Their sig-

nificance can not be overlooked in an estimate of the forces that change life. God is perpetually invading the world through good people. Redemption, though an old fact, becomes a new social experience every time a redeemed life is released among us.

When Saul, the empire builder of Israel, found himself in trouble, when difficulties were mounting and calamities multiplying, he suddenly felt a decisive need for help. He had been a bad man, disobeying God and dishonoring man. Samuel, the prophet, who had both selected and anointed Saul to be king, had tried to steer him right, to be a conscience for him. Saul openly rejected and grossly dishonored him. Samuel was dead and the empire was in danger. Saul needed counsel. He went in disguise to the witch of Endor. Hear him now: "Bring me up Samuel." I am not interested in the reality of witches or the power of the living to talk with the dead. There is a moral aspect to the story. Saul is crying for the good man that he had repelled. The only reply he got was, "Jehovah hath done unto thee as he spake by me." Strange testimony to the redemptive force of the good life!

A good life is like the rock in the desert, holding back the sand that the plants may grow in its shelter. What a damaging biography is hidden in that line written of a certain distinguished modern statesman: "He is like a beech tree, majestic, magnificent, beautiful, but nothing can grow in its shade." A group of younger graduates had returned to their college for commencement. They had been "out" a dozen years or more. The conversation turned upon the work of a certain professor

whose resignation had lately been rejected. They agreed that he taught them little in his department; that in fact he was a very poor teacher. But said one of them, "he sharpened my taste for the fine and the genuine." It was good to have him on a college campus. Humanity will never become apostate so long as there are saints, that is good people. Good people live for others just as prophets speak for others and philosophers think for others, not by conscious design but because they can't help it.

II

Horace Mann, in the words that are inscribed on the shaft erected in his honor on the campus of Antioch College, rallies us to "be ashamed to die until we have won some victory for humanity." But to how many is it given to win victories for humanity? Our parts are not cast in great plays. Purple and fine linen, worn in kings' palaces, are not for us. Our house is by the side of a very dusty road, a side road perhaps. Great events do not turn on our lives as an axis. Well, the saint is not coached for a great part nor is he conditioned by a public career. Said Emerson's squirrel to the mountain:

> "If I cannot carry mountains on my back
> Neither can you crack a nut."

"Called to be saints," not some famous "man of the hour" but some good person in the place assigned by circumstance! Of the great company that stood before

the throne in the vision of the writer of "Revelation" the only biography one could write is one of three words: "They are worthy."

Again and again we need to recover our appreciation of humble fidelity to the tested sanctities. We are beginning to suspect that what holds in our land to-day is not the greatness and goodness of our leaders, for they have proved themselves blunderers and wicked men, but the widespread fidelity of common citizens. It is again the ten righteous men that keep us from the fate of Sodom. It was Luther's glory that he showed men and women convincingly that "plain devotedness to duty" is more to be desired and praised than the holiness and asceticism of monks and nuns.

Beware then that humility which is the greatest pride; that humility which tells you that your life is of no importance. The good life, irrespective of place, is always important. St. Paul calls us to be saints in our day. Every Samuel has a Saul around somewhere.

III

How do we come by the good life? How can we make our election sure? How realize this sainthood?

Goodness, like love and truth, remains perhaps indefinable. It too, again like love and truth, happens to us. Says Canon Streeter, "We must have the habit of scepticism about all the possessions of our own mind if we are to let truth happen to us; we must utterly rid ourselves of the desire to be proved right." So, it may be, do we come by goodness. When we bring an alert,

attentive, sensitive soul to the facts of life, a soul stripped bare of moral chauvinism and Pharisaic pride, we may well find ourselves growing better. Certain it is that goodness can't be either inherited, bought or conferred. The rich young ruler discovered that for us. Goodness is not the number of goals we make but a way of playing the game. It is not conditioned by temperament, inheritance or social advantage. Goodness is a state of character we happen to acquire as a by-product of the enterprise of right daily living.

"There is a neighbor within," says Thoreau, "who is incessantly telling us how we should behave. But we wait for a neighbor without to tell us of some false, easier way." We put ourselves in the way of having goodness happen to us when we live by conscience. Conscience after all can be our only sure guide to goodness for it is its interpreter. "We may argue it into silence," as has been suggested, "but its silence is not to be mistaken for approval. The verdict remains. There can be no debate and there is no appeal. Conscience is a judge and not an advocate." To the request of the young man "what good thing shall I do?" Jesus makes sharp reply, "why askest thou me concerning that which is good?" As if the Master meant to imply that no external authority can possibly take the place of an alive and healthy conscience in the regulation of the moral life. Quite aside from the undoubted fact that our conscience needs correction in the light of Jesus' character, spirit and teaching, this further fact is also clear, namely, that our conscience is our available and unerring guide to the realities of the good

life. The mariner's compass needs correction too but it is still the only guide to successful navigation.

IV

Of much more importance are the tests we may employ to measure ourselves for the hidden deposit of good life laïd up in the years of living. Whereas goodness in the abstract may always remain indefinable the good life never leaves us in doubt. We react to it as naturally as elements held by chemical affinity. How then can I measure myself? How can I assess myself in respect of the good life? What is the glory of saint-hood?

A wise old professor said to me as I was about to enter the ministry, "Young man, there will always be plenty of liars in any congregation to tell you what a wonderful preacher you are. Pay no attention to them. The only honest measure you have is this, 'do they call you in time of trouble.' " It strikes me as a sound test for the good life generally. "Do they call you in time of trouble?" We touch here the very fundamentals of redemptive character, sympathy, genuineness, leisure for another's woes, imagination, self-giving. The Carthaginians said of Hannibal, "we vehemently desired him in the day of battle." The pathetic plea of Martha as she met the Master was "we know that if thou hadst been here my brother had not died."

"Do they call you in time of trouble?" This is the first test of the good life. How many of our clever, witty, learned friends are positively embarrassing in

time of trouble! How many of our rich, aggressive, influential friends repel us in time of trouble! How often we turn to some humble, broken, discouraged soul for a lift in time of trouble! In that moment we are paying silent tribute to the reality of the good life. By the same token may we gauge our own goodness quite accurately and without the faintest hint of Pharisaism.

The good life sends out a ray of hope through the thickening clouds of sorrow, suffering and sin. Like the pearl, to which Jesus likened the good life, its lustre is brought out best against a black background. The good life is a life of hope, not in the sense of the popular optimism of the modern "grinning gospel," but in the sense of the apostle Paul who knew that "all things work together for good to them that love God." It is a quality of the good life to make all things work together just that way. Despair is never its final verdict on life. It continues

> "To hope till hope creates
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates."

It is this aggressive hopefulness which prompted the same apostle to say "in hope are we saved."

Intelligent, open-eyed hopefulness is the major need of the hour. Men and women who can see with the prophet Ezekiel the "spirit of life" in the modern wheel-civilization, who can urge the human values upon us in a way that will compel us to honor them and give them their rightful place, such are the Samuels we are calling for. It is creative hope we want and the good

life is our only source of such hope. To have it is to have a sure token of goodness. It is the second test of sainthood.

The good life, again, is quite clear of any spirit of resentment. It never bears a grudge. It sets the best possible interpretation upon the conduct of its fellows. It may go so far as to invent flattering interpretations with an eye to ultimate redemption. The good life has nothing in common with the calculating cynicism that sets a price upon every character and proceeds to offer the price. It continues to do handsomely by men in the very hour of betrayal. It will not admit even to itself that men are as wicked as they sometimes prove themselves to be. For this reason it redeems them from their wickedness, once and again.

These are more than high-sounding phrases for platform effect. I know that we rarely approach their ideal. The more's the pity! We do not live redemptively, we do not live the good life until we have "washed the feet of Judas" on the night of betrayal. It was an American negro, George Marion McClellan, who recalled us to this test of the good life.

"Christ washed the feet of Judas!
Yet all his lurking sin was bare to him,
His bargain with the priest, and more than this,
In Olivet, beneath the moonlight dim,
Aforehand knew and felt his treacherous kiss.

"And so if we have ever felt the wrong
Of trampled rights, of caste, it matters not;
Whate'er the soul has felt or suffered long,
O heart, this one thing should not be forgot:
Christ washed the feet of Judas."

More specifically perhaps, we can ask ourselves a few very pertinent questions.

Can we rejoice in the success of a rival? Or does a rival's discomfiture bring secret satisfaction? Edwin Booth defined a Christian as one who can rejoice in the success of a rival. Jesus called John the Baptist the greatest born of woman. It was John who had said "He must increase, I must decrease." There is a brilliant story hidden in the pages of the history of English Literature. Sir Walter Scott had been England's greatest poet. He loved popularity as few men love it and quite honestly so. Then came Byron with his beguiling verse. A certain reviewer promptly announced that since Byron, Scott can no longer be called England's greatest poet. The reviewer was Scott himself. He gave up poetry and turned to the novel sadly confessing "Byron beat me." But it was he who first convinced England that Byron beat him.

Do we see more than we tell? It has been suggested that God gave us two eyes and only one tongue that we might see more than we tell. It is a test that cuts very deep. The noble Stevenson reminded us that the greatest courage is that courage which keeps us silent, when we have no kind word to speak. It is the courage of the saint. Iago told more than he saw. He drove Othello mad with jealousy and brought on tragedy. How many of the tragedies of life spring from the malicious interpretations we put upon the facts of life? Or to vary the figure, how often our own hands are dirty with the mud we have thrown, to use the phrase of Hugo.

How do we react to evil? Does it leave us complacent and indifferent? There is no redemptive power in that. Or does it arouse in us a mighty indignation which issues in cleansing social effort? There is a purity which is like white blotting paper, soaking up whatever it touches, soiled by the contacts of life. There is another purity which is like chlorine, which becomes a cleansing agent in every filthy corner. The latter is the purity of the saint. It is this aggressive goodness that saves. More distressing than the scandals in the high places of our public life is the complete absence of social indignation that follows them. Verily our times need the calling out of the saints.

"Called to be saints!" The need of the hour is sainthood dramatized in us. To continue our clamor for new leaders in politics, religion, industry and education smacks of insincerity. For a dying world saints are needed. To withold the effort at sainthood is to make the great refusal, to practice spiritual evasion. Nothing short of a moral uprising can save us now. That uprising must begin within. We are rallied by Paul to the daring adventure of redeeming society by the manifest power of our goodness.

VII

SOURCES OF PERSONAL POWER

Acts 4: 19-20 *"But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard."*

I

OBVIOUSLY these men have some hidden source of courage and strength. Two "unlearned and ignorant men" openly defy the supreme court of the land. Rulers whose very names struck terror in the hearts of the common people, Annas and Caiaphas, John and Alexander, are now not only faced but defied by Peter and John.

But what had they done? What misdeed caused them to fall into the "fell clutch" of the law? They had taught the people. Their words of teaching were taking root in the minds of the people. In due time a new crop of social judgments would spring up. Therefore abridgement of the rights of these "unlearned and ignorant men" seemed highly advisable. When will officialdom learn that you can't intimidate an idea, that you can't imprison a thought, that you can't suppress a conviction! Human history has been needlessly

bloody for want of this knowledge. Our present social experience is needlessly bitter for the same reason.

> "For every soul denied the right to grow
> Beneath the flag, will be its secret foe."

There could be only one response to this attempt at intimidation. Peter and John made it when they defied the rulers. Here then we come upon the first test of the power of conviction Jesus is able to evoke. The test is the more remarkable in the light of the history of at least one of these men, Peter.

The last glimpse we get of Peter before the crucifixion is of a man contemptible in every way, craven-hearted and blasphemous. He is renouncing all his former loyalty to Jesus. He is driving the first cruel nail of denial into, not the body, but the soul of the Master. He is joining himself to the company of the coarse who can jest at the wounds injustice inflicts on the righteous one; that dull company who in their stupidity will not see that

> "Men betrayed are mighty and great are the
> wrongfully dead."

Peter in the palace of the high priest is a sorry figure indeed, in sharpest contrast to the Peter we see before the Sanhedrin.

What happened meanwhile to transform Peter? By what spiritual alchemy is the stuff of this man's soul transmuted from base to pure metal? What powerful reaction brought him back, bold and brave, to sway the crowd at Pentecost, to defy the Council, to write his

name permanently in our history? His source of personal power promises rich blessing to every one of us if we can make it out.

Between Peter's denial of Christ and his persuasive sermon at Pentecost four things happened to which one can fairly trace the transformation in Peter.

II

The first of these was his penitence. Peter repented of his sin. He wept bitterly in humiliation and shame, a manly thing to do. It was said of Voltaire, "he was punished through what he sneered at," meaning Joan of Arc. There is something majestic about Carlyle's description of the futility of Voltaire. That such genuine acumen should accomplish next to nothing! He never overcame his will to sneer. Peter too had sneered at none other than Christ but he overcame his sneer. In that victory is the first source of his power. His tears of repentance moistened his parched soul and gave it fertility once more. He faced his past with honesty and overcame it by "getting a future out of it." He did not try to "poultice his conscience" and take the sting out of it. He accepted with manly fortitude the full responsibility of his meanness.

One could, with little difficulty, find plausible excuses for Peter. He was, for instance, no worse than the rest. The other disciples had all fled. They, too, had denied Jesus. But to be no worse than others is to be at least as bad as your contemporaries. The imita-

tion of our contemporaries and the self-satisfaction it produces is the major indictment against our modern moral character. Again, was not Judas more vile than he? True, Judas was more vile than Peter. What comfort can Peter derive from the greater guilt of his fellow disciple? How often we shield our own guilt by openly denouncing the supposedly greater iniquity of others? Peter dallied with none of these malicious devices, these satanic sophistries. "Vicarious penitence" was not in his complement of vices. And in that attitude he found strength; from it he gained courage. His very penitence became the power that drove him forward.

Long since Ruskin noted the readiness with which we admit any amount of sin in the aggregate but refuse to acknowledge even the slightest sin in the concrete. But to pray for forgiveness is merely "going through the motions," unless we are ready to drag our own specific sin before God and seek its forgiveness. When was the prodigal strong, when he sought and won his father's beneficence that he might go and squander not only that beneficence but a good deal besides? or when he "came to himself," faced his abominable misdoing and confessed it? Penitence is a source of strength.

III

Peter had caught a vision of Christ.

Jesus appeared to Peter after the resurrection. That vision of the Christ became an undoubted source of

personal power. Lest we discount the value of this experience because of a fixed conviction against the miracle of the resurrection, as is the fashion among so many, let us bear in mind that all the earliest documents contain the record of the resurrection. The miracle of the resurrection must be approached from an historical and not a metaphysical viewpoint. The real question is not "Could it happen?" but "Did it happen?"

What happened when Peter met Jesus is not fully known. The outcome we do know. Peter came from it full of understanding and determination. He was from that day forth to be not a hireling but a shepherd. The Kingdom now became a thing to be struggled for and died for. What is more important, his moral capacity for earnest work was greatly enlarged. Perhaps "a word did it," as in the case of Savonarola, who refused ever after to tell what that word was. Enough that it happened.

Parallels are not wanting in more recent history. Witness the transformation in that writer who, at the bandying request of an infidel, undertook to write a novel of Jesus, properly belittling His place in the world. The novel was written. The writer was Lew Wallace and his book "Ben Hur." But the book turned out to be against not only the infidel Ingersoll's notion but also against the writer's intention. The vision of Jesus, gained in the study of His life, did it.

Witness the transformation in the life of that eminent scholar, Albert Schweitzer. To-day he makes a threefold claim to distinction. His name first won our notice through the publication of a remarkable book,

"The Quest of the Historical Jesus." The book was not wholly complimentary to Christ. It made Him out a hopeless apocalyptic, slightly deluded though actively honest. Its closing sentences were these: "He comes to us as one unknown, without a name, as of old by the lake-side, he came to those men who knew him not. He speaks to us the same word: 'Follow thou me!' and sets us to the tasks which he has to fulfil for our time. He commands, and to those who obey him, whether they be wise or simple, he will reveal himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in his fellowship, and as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience who he is."

Schweitzer's second claim to fame is his unrivaled genius as interpreter of Bach and as master of the organ. His tour through England a short while ago was one succession of triumphs concluding with a memorable recital at Westminster Abbey. To-day Albert Schweitzer is in equatorial Africa, a medical missionary among the black folks on the river Ogowe. He used his musical talent to pay the way to a doctor's certificate and has now ended the quest for the historical Jesus by finding Him in "the toils, the conflicts and the sufferings" "on the edge of the primeval forest."

Witness the conversion of that atheist of atheists, the brilliant Italian lawyer, poet and man of letters, Papini. Trained in the dismal dogmas of atheism, convinced in disbelief, a simple study and telling of the story of Jesus wrought a complete transformation. Small wonder that his "Life of Christ" has stirred all Europe, and America too. He met Jesus and again the Galilean conquered.

Who can tell the added personal power that would come to most of us if we were as zealous for an adequate vision of the Christ as we are about the daily experiences of "Mutt and Jeff" or the annual standing of our favorite home run hitter. How much modern moral impotence and spiritual sterility is due to an improper perception of the fact, personality and meaning of Jesus Christ! Christianity will not get itself expressed in our modern world until Jesus gets Himself more fully understood. No greater guilt rests upon us than the guilt of refusing to fully understand the life and purpose of the Master.

IV

The Holy Spirit had come upon Peter. The story of the Pentecostal happening explains the unusual phenomena by the pregnant phrase, "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit."

To modern ears Spirit of Holiness conveys a deeper meaning than does the term Holy Spirit. Peter came to be moved by the Spirit of Holiness, that spirit which seeks to make good will the dominant aim in life; that spirit which seeks to realize the full intention of Jesus; that spirit which consumes the life in the endeavor to establish the Kingdom in every area of our life.

We are familiar with the spirit of business. Men will risk health, home and life itself in its service. Every move means a thrill. It drives its servants to worry and brings them to an early grave but it gives meaning and zest to life. We are familiar with the

spirit of patriotism. It makes men eloquent and gives them power to sway thousands who formerly were dumb before scores. It makes men daring, even savage in their bravery, who formerly couldn't kill a chicken. We are familiar with the spirit of pleasure. In its service, and what task-master can be more cruel, young men and women by the thousand will "throw their bodies down for God to plow them under." In like manner had the Spirit of Holiness come upon Peter. Another Apostle, who, too, had come under its influence, cried out, "I live, yet not I, Christ liveth in me."

Under the dominance of this spirit fear fled, courage returned; self-interest vanished, Christ loomed large; danger and difficulty could not intimidate, only challenge. In some recently published letters of Livingstone, that Great-Heart of the nineteenth century, comments in bitterness on the enthusiasm and consuming passion of men of business who dare the utmost in Africa while messengers of Christ remain timid and undone. How can God bless passionless endeavor? What results can we get from despondent effort? There is no power in purposeless activity. Only the Spirit of Holiness, controlling and directing our total life, can pour power into our program and make our cause effective.

Undoubtedly the major cause of our disloyalty is the conflict that is set up in our own lives between these various spirits of holiness, business, patriotism, and pleasure. Lesser loyalties have drawn off our spiritual power and modified our loyalty to the Spirit of Holiness in Christ. A main source of the contemporary

weakness of the Christian effort in our social life is this assignment of a secondary place to the loyalty to Jesus. To the Christian the issue ought to be clear. He can never be content to let his loyalty to Christ accept orders from the spirit of business or patriotism or pleasure. If modern life drives a wedge between two loyalties the vote of the Christian must always be given to that loyalty which to him can be the only supreme one.

The issue may mean sacrifice for us. It did for Peter. The duty is clear; the issue belongs to God.

V

Peter was given a definite task. The record of his interview with the Master by the seaside indicates clearly enough that Peter is destined to become the active leader of the little group of followers. Once before Jesus had asked him to establish the brethren when he came through his own difficulty. The very definiteness of the task became a source of power to the apostle. Jesus rules men by trusting them, helps them by believing in them. He still believes in them when they have given Him just cause for doubt.

God's call to service is not nearly so anonymous as most of us make it out to be. How often have we stifled the inner voice because it was too clear and definite for comfort. Those times are moments of defeat. Our moments of victory are the times when we accept the call and render the service. It may be no more than speaking a word for Jesus to some relative or

friend. It may be no more than the display of enough courage to remain silent when we have no definite word of kindness to speak. It may be a call to renounce ambition, even wealth, in order that we may have that equipment of personality which can make us fit for leadership. In each case it is the acceptance of a definite task that makes us "more than conquerors."

In a moving passage in Willa Cather's "One of Ours," she describes her principal character, Claude Wheeler, in a moment of meditation on the State House steps at Denver. He is contemplating the storm in the breast of youth, the pain of being young and full of purpose. Says the author of him, "it was a storm that died down at last—but what a pity not to do anything with it, a waste of power for it was a kind of power." To us all has come, time and again, that storm in the breast, that distinct prompting to a definite service, to a concrete expression of our inner loyalty. God forbid that it should ever be smothered!

These are the experiences that aroused Peter. These are the sources of his personal power. They can serve us equally well. The important issue is our own stirring up. Let our prayer to God be for any experience so that we will be vividly recalled to persuasive, effective service. As Stevenson in the "Celestial Surgeon" pled, so plead we:

> "If I have faltered more or less
> In my great task of happiness;
>
> If I have moved among my race
> And shown no glorious morning face;

If dreams from happy human eyes
Have moved me not; if morning skies,

Books and my food, and summer rain
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain:

Lord, thy most painted pleasure take
And stab my spirit broad awake:

Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,
Choose then, before that spirit die,

A piercing pain, a killing sin,
And to my dead heart run them in."

VIII

FINDING GOD UNREAL

St. John 14:8 *"Philip saith unto him, Lord show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."*

THIS plaintive request of Philip raises the one question that is resident in every breast; it points the one problem of religion from which all problems radiate. Our hold on reality is slipping. We are not sure of God. But as Professor David Cairns has so acutely remarked in his thoughtful book, "The Reasonableness of the Christian Faith:" "The one vital necessity of religion is to be sure of God." Our prayer again is "show us the Father and it sufficeth us." Truly "the greatest need of our civilization is an absorbing conviction as to the existence of God. Can we be sure that he is? Is there reason for faith in him, reliance upon him, and obedience to his laws? These are questions in comparison to which everything else seems trivial." These sober words of Dean Shailer Mathews evoke a genuine response in most of us.

Of the many vital matters that engage the thought and give content to the teaching of Jesus none takes precedence over his constant effort to make vivid the reality of God. He taxed his vocabulary to define the nature of his own sense of reality; he employed parable,

simile, metaphor, with the greatest skill in order to impart to his friends and followers a like sense of reality. Essentially the Master sought not to pronounce dogmas of faith but to help people believe.

We have on the one hand a very genuine yearning for a God who is real, whose fellowship is our very life, while on the other hand we experience a devastating sense of the unreality of the very God that we crave. The difficulty has been attacked in a variety of ways.

I

Durant Drake suggests that religion does not necessarily need a God to maintain its hold on life. He cites Buddhism as proof of his contention. But is not Buddhism more a denial of religious passion than a fulfilment of it, an evasion of the problem rather than a solution? Agnosticism makes precisely the same effort. It, too, seeks to be religious without bothering about the reality of God. In support of that attitude the names of a glorious company of great men can be recited. It has attracted such brilliant intellectuals as Huxley, Mark Twain, and perhaps H. G. Wells. But agnosticism is like the glory of the setting sun, dazzling, brilliant, with a hundred hues of mental beauty but utterly cold and sterile, stimulating nothing into life and growth.

A second effort to solve the difficulty has been made by exalting humanitarianism and the service of our fellowmen into the position formerly occupied by God.

This attempt recognizes fully man's passion for God and seeks to satisfy it by giving him a pretended God. It is an attempt, as Myers has so well said "to satisfy the longing of the soul for God by spelling humanity with a large H." It may fairly be asked how long such an effort can sustain itself with the object of its service as the only inspiration? Only the other day Charles Henry Dickinson issued a most engaging book "The Religion of the Social Passion," in which he quite frankly tries to make out a case for a religious experience in which humanity is the only God that is needed. Who, in the long run serves humanity best? Is it those who nourish themselves on the simple motive of service, who derive their enthusiasm for their fellowmen from an abstract ideal of brotherhood, or is it that singular company of men and women who, like St. Francis of Assisi, Elizabeth Fry and General Booth, seek to get humanity to God. The question of Forsythe cannot be easily set aside, "Is our first duty to humanity not to commit it to God?" Until we are sure of God can religion be more than an ethical effort? Any "reconstruction of religion" that leaves that issue untouched may be said to exploit the religiousness of man rather than to expound the reality of God.

We are never going to get a Christian social order, a world such as Jesus conceived, human relationships sanctified by the morality of the Christ, until we achieve a relationship with God such as Jesus had. The Sermon on the Mount was not the greatest thing Jesus gave mankind, great as it was. The greatest thing He gave us was the inspiration of a life that was so knit with

God in fellowship, so shot through with the certainty of God, so convinced of God's reality that nothing remained impossible in the way of moral achievement. It brought to His life faith to move mountains; it put into His soul courage to endure the cross; it transfigured His whole being. Ideals of morality with Him were always secondary to an experience of moral living. The capacity for moral living sprang from a fruitful experience of fellowship with God. We need in this day, as much as Jesus needed it, spiritual help more than we need moral enlightenment, or social vision. We need personalities by the thousands who not only believe the moral ideals of the Gospels but who are projected into life with force sufficient to clothe those ideals in reality. Such changes come not from the mere contemplation of the beautiful, the good, and the true. They come alone from the life-giving fellowship with a God who is real. Matthew Arnold, uncertain though he seemed to be of God, touched the nerve of our difficulty in a few illuminating lines:

'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green;
And the pale weaver, through his windows seen
In Spitalfields, looked thrice dispirited.

I met a preacher there I knew, and said:
"Ill and overworked, how fare you in this scene?"
"Bravely!" said he; "for I of late have been
Much cheered with thoughts of Christ, the living bread."

There are four main reasons why God seems so unreal to most of us.

II

The first of these reasons has been skilfully exploited by L. P. Jacks in his justly popular book "Religious Perplexities." Says he, "There is no worldly interest which has not been anxious to secure God for an ally. In all ages the attempt has been made to domesticate the idea of God to the secular purposes of individuals and of groups. If we examine the current forms of the idea we may observe the marks of this domesticating process at many points. For example, the idea of God as the sovereign potentate, governing the universe under a system of iron law, the legislator of nature and the taskmaster of the soul, the rewarder of them that obey and the punisher of them that disobey, is plainly an idea borrowed from politics, the form of the idea most convenient to those who need God as an ally in the maintenance of law and order as they conceive them. . . . It is extremely difficult to find any form of the idea of God which has retained a purely spiritual or religious character throughout the entire course of its history." A notorious illustration of the vicious attempt to pull God into an evil alliance with scheming man is the well known "Forward with God," a phrase still inscribed on the pew at Potsdam. Thus through the ages has human sentiment and honest desire for a satisfying fellowship with God been exploited in wicked ways.

"God is a spirit." But it becomes all but impossible to have any adequate sense of spiritual reality when

we are offered, either by the politician, the philosopher or the theologian, a God stripped of all spirituality and indeed of ordinary human morality. It is this attempt undoubtedly that induced the crude outburst of Carl Sandburg, "A dough-faced God with golden earrings." It is a positive sign of progress when people refuse to profess satisfaction with such a God.

It seems clearly necessary that the first step toward any adequate sense of God's reality must be to appreciate the necessity of a spiritual perception of God. This is the task of the modern man of theology.

III

This brings us face to face with the second main difficulty. The inspired writer appreciated this difficulty when he said quite frankly, "No man hath seen God at any time." Generally speaking we gain our perception of personality through the senses. We are so in the habit of confusing reality with sense-impression that the moment we are denied the privilege of grasping anything with our senses we fail to grasp it at all. "Out of sight, out of mind," is a fault not only with lovers but with believers as well.

It has been suggested, however, that even in ordinary human intercourse the physical aspect is rather an accompaniment of that relationship than its essence. Any two persons who know each other at all know each other not because they are physically present to each other but because their intimacy comes rather through

a very genuine spiritual perception. It is the inward eye that sees most clearly. The data of the senses are subject constantly to the critical review of our inward perception. We have all had the experience of making up our minds about a certain acquaintance on the basis of our sense-impression of that one only to discover in a moment of unique intimacy that our judgment was wrong; only to confess "I never knew him until now." It is perhaps this that Jesus had in mind when he said that all those who say "Lord, Lord" would not enter into the kingdom; that in the great day He would say quite curtly to them "Depart from Me, I never knew you." He knew them physically and they knew Him but there was not that inner perception which is real knowledge.

We ask ourselves, therefore, in the light of the unimportance of the physical aspect whether there are not in our own lives inner lights that furnish a basis for a quite certain and definite knowledge of a very real God. What of those promptings to great living that we all have and either follow or smother? What of this clear call to definite sacrifice of our material interests for the sake of a timely moral cause? What of this ever present sense of a disciplining presence which, if we are frivolous and sinful, we resent and shun, or, if we are sincere and earnest, we prize as life's richest blessing? They point, to my mind, to a very certain and undeniable reality.

The boy, Samuel, heard a voice in the night. The voice of God he thought it was. His whole life was fashioned by the leading of that voice. The Maid of

Orleans heard voices from the sky. Her whole career is the result of hearing those voices. And even the confirmed denier of any such thing as a being called God has his moments of crushing doubt, for Browning is eternally right in his analysis of dogmatic scepticism:

> "Just when we are safest, there's a sunset touch,
> A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,
> A chorus ending from Euripides."

IV

Again, when we speak of God we are always compelled to use symbol. The history of religious thought from the first pages of the Bible to the last outburst of Louis Untermyer portrays the greatest variety of symbolic description of the Divine Being. Either it is the Old Testament figure of the "Lord of Hosts" or the prophetic characterization of God as a forgiving husband, or the more tender term, Mother, which is used at least once of God, or finally the more abiding suggestion of Jesus that God is a loving Father. The incapacity to fitly frame thought as well as the inadequacy of human experience to escape its own limitations makes symbol necessary in our thought of God. To express a spiritual fact in language that is adapted to the setting forth of physical facts imposes a strict limitation upon us.

This necessity of itself creates a difficulty. Whereas on the one hand the symbol adopted by Jesus has enabled countless honest souls to find God and hold Him real it has also troubled more than one of us by the very

limitation of the symbol. Samuel Butler, for instance, if he were asked to think of God as Father could only think of Him in the most ungenerous and disturbing manner. His experience of fatherliness was not very satisfying. He wrote the following note on the relation sustained toward his father: "He never liked me, nor I him; from my earliest recollections I can call to mind no time when I did not fear him and dislike him; over and over again I have relented towards him and said to myself that he was a good fellow after all; but I had hardly done so when he would go for me in some way or other which soured me again. I have no doubt I have made myself disagreeable; certainly I have done many very silly and wrong things; I am not at all sure that the fault is more his than mine. But no matter whose it is, the fact remains that for years and years I have never passed a day without thinking of him many times over as the man who was sure to be against me, and who would see the bad side rather than the good of everything I said and did."

And yet to symbol we are enslaved. Its practical aid to point us to reality is undeniable. As has been so shrewdly remarked, when your friend tries to point out to you a constellation in the heavens and you fail to find it, he aids you in your search by making rough dots on a piece of paper, the dots standing in relative position one to the other as do the stars in the constellation. You glance at the dots on the paper and immediately you find the constellation in the heavens. The dots and the paper are not the constellation, they are not the reality, but they do assist greatly in finding

the constellation, in acquiring an intelligent notion of the reality. So that whereas symbol can never take the place of reality it can conduct us to reality. A tyrannous and sometimes unscrupulous orthodoxy has exercised great cruelty over the troubled souls of men and women by insisting on the acceptance of a symbolic aspect of God which no longer comports with contemporary experience. How much of the rebellion against religion among honest and sincere people is due to the crude and barbaric notions of God that they are asked to accept remains yet to be computed.

Symbols at best are fragile and helpless things. They are at all times inadequate to express fully the meaning and nature of the thing symbolized. The symbols that we use when we seek to define the meaning and nature of God are as much a confession of ignorance as an expression of insight. "But the confession of our ignorance once made," as Martineau so well says, "we may proceed to use such poor thought and and language as we find least unsuitable to so high a matter; for it is the essence and beginning of religion to feel that all our belief and speech respecting God is untrue, yet infinitely truer than any non-belief and silence."

V

The paramount reason why God seems so unreal remains to be acknowledged. "Your sins have separated between you and your God," was the avowed conviction of the prophet. Not that the gross sins of the flesh

chiefly accomplish this disastrous result. Publicans and sinners go into the Kingdom of God before many of those who are refined and cultivated. How often has it been known that vile and foul persons when the great moment of awakening came achieved a devotion that was equally notable for its fervor and completeness? Augustine is a brilliant example, so is Tolstoy.

There are sins of neglect that are frequently more destructive of the sense of God's reality than the more revolting carnal sins. This suggestion has been brilliantly pursued by President King in his helpful book, "The Seeming Unreality of the Spiritual Life." "Here is a man perhaps into whose life for years no conscious relation of God and the spiritual life has come; who has acted precisely as if they were not; who has virtually denied their existence in every act; whose thoughts, plans, purposes have been all apart from God; who has settled habits of thought and life, that are logically consistent only with the denial of God and the spiritual life. Will those habits have no influence on his spiritual insight? Is he to come now at one bound into the clear and simple vision of God and divine truth which may have belonged to his childhood? And shall he refuse to have patience to take the toilsome way back to those early convictions from which his lack of earnestness, his carelessness, his indifference, his neglect, his worldliness and his sin have separated him? Verily, I sometimes think it were a strange thing if the spiritual life were not obscure to many of us. If the voice within us were not indeed divine long since would it have been smothered under the heaped up rubbish of the years."

The rubbish of the years is so piled up on the pure intentions, the holy motives, the sanctified ambitions of the nobler beginning of life that one wonders sometimes whether that beginning can be found again. It is those sins that are most far-reaching in their consequences to our life of fellowship. It is pathetic but true that if one has once had the passion to be zealously Christian and has set it aside that it will not easily return. There is a spiritual discipline that is not unlike any other discipline. It exacts the toll of practice for the possession of the prize of certainty.

VI

Come now to Jesus' answer to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Study the portrait of the historical Christ. Give your verdict as you would on any person whose life you can study. See the human fade out and the lineaments of the Divine shine through. This is the significance finally of Papini's brilliant book, "The Life of Christ." What thought and literary insight could not bring, a study of Christ's life brought gloriously. Not by brooding nor yet by argument will one come upon the reality of God. "You rarely find dew after a windy night," said Tennyson to his son; so will you rarely find God after a stormy argument. But study Christ and your conclusion will suffice and the seeming unreality of God will vanish. Let no one undertake the denial of God who has not lingered over the portrait of Christ, the living Christ in the Gospels.

He is guilty of perilous rashness who after ever so honest a period of philosophic meditation concludes that tokens of the reality of God are manifestly absent. It is such rashness that characterizes so much of our hasty literature of doubt. Audacious, even swift, in its attack on the religious problem, one yet feels that it has left the main problem untouched; it has missed the chief fact in the data of life. That fact is Jesus Christ. Gently, wistfully he warns us, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." Ten thousand times ten thousand rise to testify that by Him they have come to the Father. They, too, are an item in the facts of life. To them has He shown the Father and it sufficed.

The New Testament is quite specific on this point. It shows little concern for metaphysical abstraction. Jesus is God in the flesh. He is as much of God as the human understanding can grasp. He is God made available for human comprehension and experience, as has been suggested. Just as there are light rays too strong for the eye of man to see but easily caught and made available on the photographic plate so the fact of God in Christ becomes a fact of experience. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"; or as Augustine puts it, "The word was made flesh that Thy wisdom might provide milk for our infant state."

IX

JESUS' TESTS FOR A VALID RELIGION

St. Matthew 11 : 4 *"Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see."*

JESUS began his public career by attaching himself to the circle of John the Baptist. He was launched on an independent ministry under the auspices of John the Baptist, for it was at his behest that certain of his own disciples joined the Master. Moreover, when Jesus came into Galilee bringing the Gospel to the people He used some of the very phrases of John. "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" was certainly a direct borrowing. To take a more striking illustration, when Jesus sought in his vocabulary for a pointed word to pierce the thick skin of Pharisaism he chose the effective "ye offspring of vipers" of John—a word found in no other place in the New Testament.

The high esteem in which Jesus held John is unquestioned; he is the greatest of the Prophets. He is in sharp contrast with the priests and religious leaders of the day. They fawn and scrape the floor before kings and governors; he calls sharply to account the licentious ruler of Galilee. They frequent palaces and regale themselves in luxury; he adopts the dress and habit of the ascetic and flees in revolt from the degen-

erate ways of the times. They make a display of their piety, seeking the face of men; he shuns the face of man the better to behold the face of God. "Among them that hath been born of woman there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist."

That John held Jesus in the highest reverence goes without saying. He committed himself decisively when he declared, "He must increase but I must decrease." The Master engaged the loyalty and confidence of John. It was given without stint or reservation. So much is evident. What then shall we make of this deputation sent by him to Jesus with the almost brutally frank question, "Art thou He that should come or look we for another?" The deputation reached Jesus at the end of his tour in Galilee. Definite reports had probably reached John in his prison cell on the Dead Sea concerning the Master's work. It is on the basis of these reports that he so flatly challenged him.

Jealousy has been suggested as a motive prompting the action. "A Christian," according to Edwin Booth, "is one who rejoices in the superiority of a rival." Jesus was no rival of John but rather a successor to him. One need not insist on that interpretation. If one may say so, the question of John is an honest challenge to the Christ to exhibit good reasons why anyone should believe in the validity of his regeneration. Let Jesus apply reasonable tests to the movement He is leading. Jesus accepts the challenge, censuring John not at all for, said He, "Blessed is he who findeth no occasion to stumble in Me." Even John, noble soul that he is, has stumbled.

Glorious as it would have been to have had him believe implicitly, it is not immoral to have him doubt.

In meeting the challenge Jesus made this terse reply, "Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them."

Strictly speaking John's question is symbolic of the challenge that the old order always flings to the new. For that reason the tests that Jesus applies to his religion, become valuable to religious people at any time.

I

Jesus appealed to the present, not the past, and His concern about the present is always with a tremendous reference to the future. The Master was never willing to trade on the credulity of people. There was much in the past that He might have appealed to for vindication. He might have appealed to the prophetic utterances concerning himself. Great numbers of people would have given credence to such an appeal. Could He not have reminded John of His baptism and what happened on that singular occasion? He might even have made John "eat his own words," for had not the Baptist expressed himself very forcibly concerning the Master? Perhaps there is someone who would suggest that He might have appealed to the virgin birth. Jesus never once refers to it. The Master insisted that the validity of His religion will be established by its contemporary

effect. "Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see" now.

Christianity must vindicate itself anew in each generation. There is much in the past of modern Christianity that is glorious and attractive. The temptation to appeal to it for the vindication of the present is severe. We dare not yield to it.

The Christianity which we have inherited can point to a long list of brilliant achievements. In the city of Paris there stands a majestic old building symbolic of the achievement of Christianity. It is the first hospital erected in Europe. One goes to Rome and beholds the glorious ruins of the Coliseum, the scene of so many a ghastly combat between man and wild beast. It was the power of Christianity working in the life of an aged monk that stopped the brutality and rendered the Coliseum a ruin. Christianity can lay claim to the making of the modern gentleman, for the Crusades made him and Christianity made the Crusades. There is the movement of the Reformation which gave us the modern world with its freedom and its changed viewpoint. Or what of the Puritan Movement, a fresh outburst of aggressive Christianity, which gave us not only the Anglo-Saxon home, the foundation of our social order, but also modern scientific inquiry. And what an achievement we see in Plymouth and American democracy. The historian concedes that it was not until the ideals of democracy obtained the power of religious conviction that they got themselves expressed in a social order. The past of Christianity is noble. Perhaps for that very reason we dare not appeal to it.

Jesus' tests for a valid Christianity must be taken seriously. We want a Christianity that has not only a majestic past but also a winsome present; one that can evoke not only reverence but also enthusiasm. If we persist in feeding on the past we need to be reminded, in Hugo's phrase, that "to feed on the past is to bite the dust." That Christianity was potent in the sixteenth century means nothing to the twentieth century. Let it be powerful now if it can. Much of the social mischief of the present is caused by the foolish habit of trying to force fixed ideas that have a past on growing minds that crave a future. An idea to be successful must not only be true but timely. Even the martyr wastes his life if he is dying for an idea that isn't timely. With the best will in the world and the finest qualifications of salesmanship, how many ox-carts do you think a man or an army of men could sell to-day? They might be perfectly good ox-carts but people are traveling in automobiles. For the warfare of the present we must go, not to the theological museum, but the moral arsenal.

In his bracing book on "Compromise" John Morley reminds us that "of all the evil spirits abroad at this hour in this world insincerity is the most dangerous." But what is insincerity? It is an evil mixture compounded of an almost violent belief in an outgrown dogma and a similarly violent refusal to permit the new life of the present to express itself in a teaching indigenous of it. "Nothing hinders the victory of Jesus Christ more fatally than the suspicion that His champions and advocates are opportunists; that they are

less than candid; that they practice mental reservation." Raven of Cambridge insists "that the universities are surging with religious life," but he goes on to warn us of "the haunting fear among young people that clergy and laity alike are insincere; that they are deliberately repeating words which they know to be untrue." The times need nothing so much as a leader who can express Christianity in terms that will release the full power of our believing capacity. The new statement of belief may be more faulty, less confident than the old. So long as it is timely it will serve our purpose. We must bear in mind Ruskin's injunction that "the life of religion depends on the force of faith not the terms of it." Santayana's suggestion is in order: As in the building of the Cathedrals of Europe successive centuries contributed their parts in differing styles while the pile, when complete, was a harmonious whole so will the Temple of Humanity be raised by the coöperative effort of successive generations, each working in its own particular way. When completed that Temple will be a pleasing and harmonious whole.

II

Jesus appealed to works and not words. The second test that was chosen by the Master to be applied to His religion was the test of fact as against opinion. Once, we are informed, the Master sought to get Himself vindicated by opinion. "Whom do men say that I am?" Apparently the method was disappointing. We learn

that later he insists, "Believe Me for the very work's sake." The "works" that Jesus appeals to in this particular instance seem to be miracles. To the modern man the vindication of Christianity by an appeal to the miracles of Jesus is not very attractive. Let us not wince at miracle. As Dean Mathews so pointedly observes, "An exceptional man may be expected to do exceptional things." If some first century individual should read the story of modern doings he would probably be just as sceptical concerning what he would call the miracle of antiseptic surgery, for instance, navigation under the sea, and in the air, and many of our other practices. It was only a very few years ago that Lord Northcliffe, that Lucifer among the fallen angels of newspaperdom, threatened to dismiss a reporter who had lost his senses so far as to put an item in the paper which seemed to indicate that the Wright brothers had flown in a heavier-than-air craft.

But the element of miracle is not the dominant nor even the most significant fact that Jesus points to. John had insisted that the coming savior of society would accomplish its regeneration. Jesus in seeking vindication by an appeal to fact implies that the results will be convincing to John. In other words, is it not true that with each record of a miraculous happening there practically always goes the story of a changed life. The sober words of a noble scholar are certainly to the point: "Even when He appealed to the works which are commonly called miraculous, He appealed not so much to the power exhibited by the works (which He admitted might quite conceivably come from Satan),

but to their goodness. It was the merciful character of His healings which showed that they came from God."

It is a commonplace to observe that works of mercy and sacrifice have a strange power to convince us of the validity of a religion which opinions do not have. Men will support a religion that issues in self-sacrifice, good-will, benevolence and long suffering, who do not support the theological opinions of its priests and preachers. This is not to despise theology but to face fact. It, too, is honorable.

"Christianity came into the world in the simple dress of the prophet of righteousness. It won that world by the stern reality of its life, by the subtle force of brotherhood, by its message of consolation and of hope. Around it thronged the race of eloquent talkers, the sophists of the fourth century particularly, who persuaded it to change its dress and to assimilate its language into their own. Christianity seemed thereby to win a better, completer victory. But it purchased conquest at the price of reality." Such is Hatch's analysis of fourth century influence upon Christianity. It became a religion of rhetoric and eloquence rather than a reality and an experience. To this very day the dominant danger to Christianity is the eloquence that is put forward on its behalf. Too frequently the truths of Christianity are truths of utterance rather than truths of life. Just as a class of chemists who sought to vindicate their science by an appeal to their rhetoric would be ridiculous, so is a class of Christians who appeal to their rhetoric rather than the hard facts of their experience becoming ridiculous. Christianity dare not resent the

test of fact. Its vindication lies in its appeal to fact. If Christianity would vindicate itself to-day it must establish works to which it can appeal. Those works must be Christianized personalities.

Christianity answers few mental queries but satisfies all moral longings; it is not to be studied so much as practiced; it is not to be believed so much as tried; its faith springs not from credulity but from experiment. Christianity leaves you free to face any theory, scientific, psychologic, philosophic, with an open, inquiring mind. It has lived happily with several opposite theories, often simultaneously. Theories arrayed in antagonism have exhibited equal virtue in their devotees. What Christianity abhors is not mental inquiry but moral stagnation, not the confused head but the cold heart. The peace of the callous heart is Christianity's signal for a fight, beginning within. The final answer of Christianity to the inveterate questions of the human mind is Christian people. To the question of evil Job is the answer, to the question of pain Stevenson. Let Livingstone, Chalmers, and Grenfell speak, for they have caught the heart beat of the Christ.

III

"The poor have the Gospel preached to them." Not since the prophets had any one taken the Gospel—good news—to the poor. And the prophets can hardly be said to have brought "good news." Here then is a striking phenomenon. Jesus seeks out the poor. He seeks them to bring them good news.

Religion as then known was anything but good news, especially to the poor. It had become support of an institution rather than access to God. That institution had become ever more relentless in its requirements and more neglectful of the poor. Thus came about that great class of socially insignificant, "the lost," to whom Jesus came.

To recover Jesus' passion for the socially insignificant man may yet prove to be the most difficult task of modern Christianity. Russia in its present state may well be a warning to that type of religious leadership which fails to be touched by the deeper needs of the socially insignificant. What earnest, cross-bearing Christian does not feel a personal sting in the words of Shaftesbury, who in his bitter struggle for that class of socially insignificant had to cry out "Sinners were with me, saints were against me." Better a thousand fold that modern Christianity go under, as the romantic pessimists predict that it will, battling for the socially insignificant than that it live amid pomp and pride, totally deaf to their pleadings.

A religion that is good news to the socially insignificant, such is the religion of Jesus, such must any valid religion be. Let modern Christianity measure itself by that test.

But what was the good news Jesus brought? That God is a Friend, a fatherly, available, helpful Presence; that life may be a quiet joy when lived in this friendly companionship; that the things to be chiefly striven for are simple—they are love, kindness, peace, and self-control; that sin hasn't the final say in life for

"Parson chaps aren't mad supposin'
A man can change the way he's chosen;"

that even sin can't smother the friendship of God; that death is not the final verdict of life. It is a message of hope, when wearying with the struggle, "Come unto me and I will rest you"; when discouraged, "Fear not, little flock, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"; when agitated and passion-torn, "My peace I give unto you." In a word Jesus furnished, as has been so well said, "a Divine basis for daily living." Can modern Christianity do that? That is the one thing it is expected to do.

It can as it renews its own conviction in the simple response of Jesus to His friend John; if it is willing to accept these tests and establish its validity on this basis. Let it judge itself by these tests of Jesus lest God bring a worse judgment upon it.

Judgment must begin at the House of God. There is something depressing about the current eagerness to absolve the church of all blame for our modern social misery. There is cause for alarm among the followers of Christ in the fact that the church is counting so little in the attempted solutions of our problems. We do not want another Canossa where the rulers of men repent before the heads of the church. But it would be a sign of great hope if we could all stand before our God in penitence and tears for our social indifference and moral impotence. When we do so stand we may be certain of a new outburst of spiritual fervor and a fresh out-pouring of His Spirit.

X

CHRISTIANITY AND SEX

St. John 10:10 *"I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly."*

I Corinthians 6:20 *"Glorify God therefore in your body."*

JESUS had a great deal to say about sex. He dealt mercilessly, though constructively, with the conventional standard of sex conduct as He did with the current standard in other areas of social living. He met the sophistries of the day with genuine ethical insight. "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her." Repeatedly He cast His sheltering sympathy about the social outcast, especially the woman. Plainly He thought He had a helpful message to those who found themselves in moral distress.

A like boldness has not characterized the Church of Christ in dealing with sex morality. An almost universal conspiracy of silence has kept the subject out of the mouth of the religious leader and teacher. It is not to be discussed from the sacred desk. The subject is taboo. But if the church persists in this attitude it might as well admit forthwith that the really vital themes of life are out of its province.

"The evils that come through the mismanagement of

sex relations have beaten every civilization up to the present." This very arresting statement by a British clergyman who has written ably and with authority on sex morality raises the stubborn question "Will they beat ours?" They will unless we display greater ability in the management of private morals than we have hitherto. The situation is alarming. The divorce rate in the United States is now one to every seven marriages. That exceeds the record of any other country. Our social life is red with moral anarchy; our current literature wallows in mire. Chastity is held lightly. Nor can we dismiss the whole matter with the flippant remark that a lot of indecent people are expressing themselves. Unless a guiding voice takes up the cause of sexual right-living our social life will be given over entirely to such leadership as our naturalistic fiction offers. Only recently so responsible a journal as the New Republic has lent its pages to a frontal attack on the time-tested Christian standard of sex morality. The writer of the article advocates, or at least sanctions, irregular sex relations, trial marriage and experimentation. Continency and self-control are held unnatural. Financial mastery of the woman's body is the only evil recognized by him. Professor Stuart Sherman sees developing among us "an æsthetic philosophy which rejects the moral valuations of life." One may fairly ask, are these tokens of a rising tide of evil which, when at its flood, will take down with it the institutions of our social life? May it not be necessary for some "gloomy dean" to rise up among us and cry out "I come to bury America and not to praise her"?

True, much of the literature seeks justification for its attack on the Christian standard of sex morality in the fact that the conventions of society are manifestly unfair. Our modern literature gives to the woman an unquestioned right to choose her own sex career; it exalts this right over against the narrow and stupid dictates of society. It is thus a protest against social conventions that have too long dominated the field of sex morality, for they are and have been inherently unjust. Too long have our conventions wickedly assumed that the whole burden of clean living rests on the woman; too long have we punished the woman only for sex irregularity. That the modern thinking person rebels against this attitude is not to be deplored but to be praised. Let it be understood, however, that there never was a distinction between men and women in the Christian standard of morality. The unjust social conventions cannot claim the standard that I am pleading for as a basis. To treat unchastity among men as a light offense, while it merits condign punishment, even social ostracism, among women, is not the spirit of Christian morality, nor its letter. No Christian has any sympathy with a standard of sex life which permits a man to ask of a woman that which, if she gives it, will outlaw her from respectable society. That the double standard is going is all to the good but the sober truth remains that the modern protests against the wicked double standard have at the same time developed a definite trend toward a more wicked single standard, the man's standard. This alleged freedom that current literature and modern practice claim to bring is freedom

for the woman to be as wicked as the man, with safety. Society is asked to condemn its manifestly unfair conventions only to give sanction to a convention, which if it be more fair, is also more corrupting. Society yields at its own peril.

Clearly put then, what is the problem of modern sex morality? What are the data of discord upon which one must think to think clearly through to an adequate standard that may be practiced with safety and that offers a measure of social salvation to us? Must the Christian standard of sex morality be superseded?

I

The fashion in Christian piety has always been to regard the fact of sex as indecent and to treat the sex instinct as an evidence of our common degeneracy. The very words, designating the various elements of the sex life, were dark secrets to be kept from young ears. How often have boys and girls of early adolescence made furtive raids on the dictionary to make out the dark meaning of some accidentally discovered word related to the sex life. Ignorance has been synonymous with innocence, knowledge with guilt. Especially must the young girl come to her wedding day with a mind immaculately empty of anything like adequate information about the most serious task of her life, consummation of love in Christian family life. Such has been the attitude of Christian piety, so-called. That attitude is full of guilt, pregnant with mischief, definitely

unfair to the young people about to enter a full and complete experience of life.

The sex instinct is a fact of life. To ignore it is dangerous, as it will not be ignored. It has strange power to demand recognition. Sex desire will knock at the door of life, sooner or later, beckoning the privilege of entrance upon experience. To call it "bad" or "wicked" is to hopelessly confuse God's order of creation. The truth is that sex desire is natural and proper. It can be made beautiful and useful. At any rate it is a fact of life. The most obvious thing to do about it is to understand it. It is at this point that Maude Royden is flaying so powerfully the quack Christians who are trying to besmirch sex feeling as wrong and sinful. There is nothing wrong and sinful about it and it need not become dangerous if one is taught its nature and the proper use of it.

The horror of evasion was brought home to me some years ago when a quite young girl of excellent character brought the broken fragments of her life, pleading pathetically that I help put them together again, if such a thing be possible. She was not vicious, she was not depraved. Her cry was "I did not understand. No one ever told me." And if I am speaking to some young man or woman to-night who does not understand and does not know let me ask you very earnestly to find out from the proper person, your father and mother, at once. To know is to take the first step in self-control and self-management of your sex life. If you fail in that, any other success you may achieve can bring you little permanent satisfaction. The strategy of fate, the

proper mastery of your own future, begins right there. Don't trifle.

II

To the Christian there is and always has been only one standard of sex morality. It is a single standard, the same for men and women the world over. It makes no concession to human weakness for the fellowship of Christ supplies strength at every point in life's tempted way, at this point perhaps more than at any other. In the fight for character the Christian repeatedly cries out, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." The Christian standard is quite specific on this point. It says unmistakably that chastity before marriage and fidelity and self-control after marriage are the only mark of manhood and womanhood redeemed by Christ. It makes the same demand of rich and poor, male and female, the world over. True, men there have been, and women too, high in the affairs of the church who have in their conduct flaunted this standard. The very execration the regenerate conscience visits upon their memories vindicates the standard. Not that failure need be the final verdict on the fallen. Forgiveness is also a fact of Christianity and a glorious fact. But forgiveness for failure follows penitence and penitence exalts the standard from which one has fallen.

Alongside the Christian standard, however, is another standard of sex morality, the conventional standard. It is frankly partial to the man. It holds no high

and inspiring goal of integrity before the young man. It puts the whole responsibility for sex integrity upon the woman. It tags the woman who yields with a damning name while it has only a cynical smile for the man. It rests on the assumption that human nature is base and depraved and that utter integrity is a dream. The conventional standard of sex morality is the most unchristian item in our whole scheme of modern life. It is a cowardly compromise with evil, it holds a dishonoring and pessimistic view of human nature, it is contemptible in its attitude toward woman. Respectability and not honor is its watchword. To this scale we are paring down our moral conduct.

This has developed a deep-seated modern superstition that the Christian standard of sex morality is against human nature; that its exalted attitude is only a pose; that hope of attainment is spurious. Let us turn to this superstition for a moment and examine it.

III

Moral law is never against human nature but in fulfillment of it. It issues from the heart of life and experience. Stealing is wrong not because God thundered from Sinai 'Thou shalt not steal' but because orderly social life could not go on if property were not protected. Experience validates the decalogue. So with murder and slander. And so with sex immorality. There is as much justification in human nature for murder, theft and evil communications as there is for

loose sex life. Which is to say there is none. The self-preservation of human nature requires these moral mandates against the forces of disintegration. They are the forces that resist destruction. These moral laws are life. An acute critic has recently remarked on the note of sexual disgust which characterizes our modern realistic fiction. "The stench of a disintegrated personality" fumes in the books of the moderns like a "last irreducible hell." The ultimate outcome of this so-called freedom from moral restraint is disgust. What greater testimony to the need for a moral law which grows out of life can we have?

But, you ask, does not my sex instinct demand a sex experience which the Christian standard labels "wrong"? Let us see. What is human nature? It is a threefold affair, made up of body, mind, and spirit. For its fulfillment no one of these may make demands the satisfaction of which will violate the demands of either one of the other two. If it does it is against human nature. The ascetic who fled to his hut on the mountain to dwell in solitary confinement was wrong because he outraged the body in the interests of the spirit. Likewise is the libertine wrong who, to give his body the experience its instincts crave, violates the the spirit and outrages the mind. A sex experience contrary to the Christian standard of morality is against human nature therefore because it sacrifices the natural rights of mind and soul to the craving of the body. Any bodily satisfaction that robs you of peace of mind and integrity of spirit is distinctly against human nature. This the Christian standard is set to pre-

vent. This an unchristian sex experience does. Testimony on that point is abundant.

Moreover, it now seems certain that monogamy is a practice antedating by many centuries the advent of Christianity. Biologists are suggesting that it was a regular practice among primitive peoples; some scientists insist that pre-human orders of life are given to it. Strange testimony indeed to the naturalness of the Christian standard of sex morality. One must never forget further that the Eden of a legitimate sex experience stands guarded by the flaming sword of disease which so inevitably overtakes him who practices promiscuity.

IV

If therefore, the Christian standard is not against human nature how can one be enabled to practice it; by what process can sex morality become happily Christian, in the light of normal human experience? Such questions are fair and deserve a frank and honest answer. It is to be observed immediately that sex life will never be elevated unless we are prepared to undertake an approach to it on a basis higher than merely sex hygiene. Bodily excellence, after all, is not primarily the aim of Christian morality. It is that fullness of life that Jesus came to give that constitutes his moral ideal; wherefore it is quite necessary to understand that any lesser standard is condemned not chiefly because it is wrong but because it prevents that rightful fullness of experience which human nature in its threefold aspect demands. It is with this in mind

that I want to make three suggestions in response to the question at the head of this paragraph.

First, any unwilling repression of the sex instinct, as indeed of any fundamental instinct, courts disaster. So much the psychologists are certain of. Merely to display will-power and self-control arbitrarily, though it may carry one over the road roughened by specific temptation, will hardly bring that satisfaction to life which a willing and enthusiastic practice of purity certainly brings. To achieve that wholesomeness of life which the sex instinct threatens to spoil one needs to be resolved quite willingly and with a measure of enthusiasm not only not to have an unchristian sex experience but to compel the very energy of life to find other channels for its fulfillment. What I am saying is that we must fall back on the well-established principle of the new psychology, the sublimation of the life force.

Stripped of the rather menacing technicalities in which it expresses itself the new psychology says quite plainly that this cosmic energy, this dynamic force, this urge, this drive within which it calls the libido, seeks to express itself through our instincts; psychology also says that it is perfectly possible to divert this urge from one channel to another. This process of diversion is called sublimation. Wherefore one is quite correct in suggesting that one can direct the outlet of his energies according to the authoritative standard of moral values that Christianity confers upon us. In doing so he in no sense outrages his nature. Indeed he gives himself the chance for a richer, more complete, more satisfac-

tory experience of life. Julian Huxley, writing from the standpoint of the biologist, has pointed out recently that in man the constant trend of development is to subordinate the physiological side to the psychological. In animals the reverse is true. "One of the most important biological generalizations is that progressive evolution is accompanied by the rise of one part to dominance and, whenever there are many parts to be considered, by the arrangement of the rest in some form of hierarchy, each part being subordinate to one above, dominant to one below. It is such a hierarchy which we must try to construct in our mental organization." There are values, ideals and goals which are ultimate to the life of man. They represent the maximum of attainment, fullness of life. Truth, honesty, mental satisfaction, righteousness, freedom from a sense of guilt, serviceableness are such values. The good life seeks the fulfillment of these above all things else. It is a positive fact of science that the energy of the sex instinct can be transformed, much as physical energy is transformed, so as to stimulate the higher parts of the mind, to give reality to these values. In other words, a willed self-control of the sex instinct issues in renewed activity in the realm of art, music, religion, social service, or one's own work. Lack of such self-control marks the breakdown of that mental hierarchy which is essential to satisfactory living. That there will be difficulty cannot be denied. There will always be adolescent problems. But the Christian standard of sex morality is not against human nature.

Second, the great emotions follow the persistent loyalties. The power of an instinct over us is its capacity to give us a thrill. We live joyously when we live instinctively. There is a strange, if transient, ecstasy that accompanies our instinctive acts. War thrills; it ministers to the instinct of pugnacity. Gain thrills; it ministers to the acquisitive instinct. Lust thrills; it ministers to the sex instinct. But the thrill is always transient, it does not last. The ecstasy is momentary. It is followed invariably by bitter seasons of depression and disillusionment. The happy man is he who finds a source of permanent ecstasy, a basis of life that can give him a continuous thrill.

The great and permanent emotions of satisfaction follow our persistent loyalties. The nine sentences of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount furnish the only basis for permanent happiness man knows. They are the catalogue of values of the master of the happy life. Loyalty to them is the only guarantee of permanent joy though the traitor may gain a momentary satisfaction. The end is disillusionment and vexation of spirit. Many are the laments of the world-weary who were not loyal. Listen to one of them. "To-morrow is my birthday—that is to say at twelve o'clock, midnight; i.e. in twelve minutes I shall have completed thirty and three years of age ! ! !—and I go to my bed with a heaviness of heart at having lived so long, and to so little purpose." (Quoted from the diary of Byron.) Among those nine sentences of Jesus is one "Blessed are the pure in heart." Its meaning is plain. Steadfast diligence in the keeping of the heart whence are

the issues of life is the only certain road to final joy.

Third, it is the privilege of a Christian minister to say quite certainly that the religion of Jesus offers rare help in the fight for character. The help that it offers is manifold. In the person of Jesus it holds up before us a character spotless within and without yet "tempted in all points like as we are." Since his time there have been thousands upon thousands, too numerous for man to count, who have found in the matchless companionship of this spotless one a sustaining force in the day of battle. They too rise up before us to testify that it can be done. He who fails in this matter of sex morality has failed where many others have succeeded. He need not have failed. To accept the mastery of Jesus over his life is the first step to help him succeed.

The redemption of the erring and the weak is a cardinal fact of Christian experience. That Christ will keep us from falling is also a fact and just as important. We have been too content to neglect Christ until we begin to slip. Or, to vary the figure, we have been content to use our religion chiefly as a medicine whereas it is primarily a food. He who feeds on Christian ideals and Christian emotions, he who disciplines himself in the practice of Christian habits day by day puts himself far from the need of religious medicine.

There is essentially nothing magical or even very mysterious about the aids of religion to clean living. One chooses in his better moments to practice the standard of Christian morality. Every thought, every

fellowship, every enterprise is established with that end in view. Persistent loyalty gradually wins over the emotional self. Satisfaction and ecstasy follow. Temptation has less and less power over us. One finds himself finally as free to do the right and the good as one longs to be. Determined loyalty to Jesus and His professed and implied standard of sex morality is perhaps the only approach to an ultimately adequate and permanently satisfactory moral career.

XI

A NEW APOSTOLATE

Joshua 3:5 *"Sanctify yourselves for to-morrow Jehovah will do wonders among you."*

TO say that we live in a period of disillusionment is a truism. Like all truisms it does pay tribute to the prevalence of that feeling. The prevailing sentiment certainly is that we have been cheated out of something we were promised. Had we not sacrificed for it, bled and died that it might come to pass? For our blood and tears are offered only ugly reality, cold ashes of discontent for living enthusiasms. The present savors of fraud and mockery—"fraud upon the dead and a mockery of the wooden crosses."

The disillusionment set in early. Scarcely had the burning phrases of Woodrow Wilson cooled down, phrases that struck hope in the hearts of countless millions that had given up hope, phrases that by their very saneness and force seemed to make a new world real, just around the corner, when Sir William Orpen painted his much discussed picture of the men who won the war. Sir William was commissioned by the British government as the official artist at the Versailles Conference. He had been at work for eight months on his canvas, painting the figures of Wilson,

Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Foch, and the rest. In a moment of inspiration he brushed those figures out and painted the picture that one now sees in the Royal Gallery. There is the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles. In the center stands a solitary coffin. Two men in khaki stand at attention, one at either side; their helmets are tilted at a rakish angle, their puttees undone; in their hands they hold their muskets as though they were banjos. The soldiers are dead and on their ghastly faces is the suggestion of a bitter and ironic smile. The men who won the war!

The bitterness of our anguish stands revealed when one recounts the prevailing prophecies of our day. They stand out like menacing icebergs in a foggy sea. Santayana, whose conclusions we resent while we brood gloomily over his suspected insight, seems certain that "civilization is perhaps approaching one of those long winters that overtake it from time to time. A flood of barbarism from below may soon level all the fair work of our Christian ancestors, as another flood two thousand years ago leveled those of the ancients. Romantic Christendom, picturesque, passionate, unhappy episode—may be coming to an end." And thus the era is to be ended; our hope is to be utterly burnt to ashes.

The Christian heart throws back a dogged denial. It finds no comfort in the dismal dogmas of "defeatism" though it confesses its perplexity. These well-worn prophecies of doom seem like slaps to a crying child, cruel blows intended to quiet us by terror. True, in the short space of a half dozen years, we have slipped

from the Mount of Transfiguration to the Slough of Despond. The contrast between the moral wisdom of Wilson and the sentiment of Santayana is depressing indeed. Nevertheless we press for a new attack on our problem. We took our task too lightly. We underestimated our problem. We were guilty of an unreasoned if not an unscrupulous optimism. We bristled with confidence in a morrow filled with wonders, forgetting that we had a part in the making of that morrow. The plain fact is that we were taken unawares; we met the morrow unprepared. We came upon our "moment to decide," our crucial hour, unequipped, if not unresolved. We were not sanctified and the morrow came void of wonders.

"Sanctify yourselves," cried Joshua to the eager, expectant company that followed him. Before them stretched the promised land. The wilderness was a memory. The morrow seemed secure. Only Joshua remained undeceived. His task was clear. He had, in the phrase of Graham Wallas, to "replace impulse with purpose." The idealism of the wilderness had now to become the reality of the open country.

I take it that we are on the verge of a promised land—promised by every Christian impulse that stirred our souls these latter days. The future is not lost. We have still the prospect of a morrow full of wonders. The ancient formula may yet prove valid. "Sanctify yourselves for to-morrow Jehovah will work wonders among you."

The word "sanctify" is strange to our ears. It is a theological word. It has a history, as most words have.

Throughout the Old Testament it stood for a ritualistic ceremony by which one prepared oneself to face God. Jesus, however, gave it a new turn when in that great prayer he said, "For their sakes I sanctify myself." Not now, it seems, did the Master sanctify Himself to face God but rather to face man. It represented to the Christ the personal equipment essential to an adequate leadership of men eager for a new order of life. One may suggest, though I do not press the point, that "educate" is probably our modern equivalent for the ancient "sanctify."

What then are the items necessary in our personal preparation for the fulfillment of a wonder-working to-morrow? Can one indicate specific factors in the making of the modern man or woman that may be expected to vouchsafe a greater to-morrow? A few suggestions seem obvious enough.

I

First is the secularization, or perhaps better the making universal, of the pastoral instinct. Progress has always come because men and women have felt a responsibility to bring it to pass and have given their lives to its consummation. Paul must "see Rome"; Wesley takes "the whole world for his parish"; Livingstone attacks "the open sore of the world." To believe in anonymous progress is to trust to magic. It is possible only to the naïve in mind and heart. The destiny of civilization rests with the men and women who

have the pastoral instinct. There it has always rested. Humanity has followed, and follows to-day, those with the soul of the shepherd.

For a hundred and fifty years the man of religion gave the set to our American life for in him was found the seat of social authority. He felt the responsibility of the pastoral instinct. Is not the stream of Puritanism the main force playing upon our social life hitherto? Since Darwin on the one hand and the industrial revolution on the other he has yielded his place to the man of science and the man of business. Upon them now is the responsibility of the pastoral instinct. Wherefore I plead for a secularization of that instinct. As they are the center of social authority so must they become the apostles of social salvation.

Two essays remain to be added to Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero Worship." They are "The Hero as Man of Science" and "The Hero as Man of Business." The former is organizing knowledge while the latter organizes our social life. Between these is divided our social authority of to-day. To these the American community looks for wisdom, guidance, certainty. The passion for clarity of the former combines with the zeal for practicality of the latter to give tone and timbre to our modern life. I am not disposed to deplore this turn in our life. I gratefully welcome the implicit trust in the self-vindicating power of truth which science exhibits.

"Truth justifies herself, and as she dwells
With hope, who would not follow where she leads?"

I welcome just as gratefully the passion of the man of business for the workable, the practical. It is bred in the Anglo-Saxon bone, this conviction that progress must somehow proceed out of the past, not against it. Since Cromwell we are under the obligation of finding some way of realizing ends which flow naturally out of what has gone before. A violent break with the past is impossible as it is unwise.

Luther strove valiantly, and successfully, for the doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers. To that doctrine needs to be added the universal responsibility of believers. Doing chores in the church can't compose the scope of responsibility of the believer in our modern world. To be a faithful husband, a good neighbor, a credulous worshiper, and a kind, considerate father may satisfy a timid conscience, but it can't possibly produce a wonder-working Christianity. The morrow is not safe until we gain a diffusion of the pastoral instinct. To hold a class of men, and women too, set apart from the practical concerns of life, responsible for the Christianization of our modern world is as stupid as it is unfair.

How can this change be encompassed? Not until the desk and the laboratory be made the vehicles of God's saving grace. The true pulpit of Christ in our day is not to be found in church or cathedral only. Your business, whatever it be, must become Christ's pulpit; your life in that business His eloquence, an eloquence of deed more than of word. It was from the boat of Peter that Jesus' voice reached the crowd with its message of regeneration and love. The fishing

business of Peter and his friends became the pedestal upon which Jesus erected his redemptive leadership. Until the modern man of business and of knowledge furnishes a like pedestal to the same Christ our redemption remains unrealized. George F. Babbitt rules to-day. Unpromising as it appears he must nevertheless be helped to an appreciation of his responsibility.

II

It follows hard upon what I have just said that to project a wonder-working Christianity into our modern life we need a gospel for the strong, not only for the weak. To the now hackneyed question "Has Christianity failed?" the answer is simply, "Yes." A Christianity concerned chiefly with help for the weak has failed for it is the strong that create the mischief, that thwart the purposes of the Lord. The ancient emphasis has been found inadequate. It is in that sense that Christianity has failed. The day of a Christianity that is

> "An ambulance
> To bring life's wounded and malingerers in,
> Scorned by the strong"

is done.

That Christ brings strength to the weak, help for the fallen, health to the sick, and sustenance to the poor is a glorious fact. Let it never be neglected or gainsaid. Hospitals, orphanages, schools, and temples speak more eloquently than the tongue of man on that point. That, nevertheless, cannot remain the major

emphasis in the Gospel message for our time. The era of a Christianity for the weak is at an end. We want now a Christ who can command the strong, who can evoke loyalty and consecration from the powerful. Browning, in a few astringent lines, has pilloried the well kept strong who remain unmoved before the suffering weak round about:

> "As I lie smiled on full-fed
> By unexhausted power to bless,
> I gazed below on hell's fierce bed,
> And those its waves of flame oppress,
> Swarming in ghastly wretchedness."

He is prompted to no helpful conduct. He is untouched by need. We cannot permit the modern man of commerce and of knowledge, men with "unexhausted power to bless," to usurp the guilty place of the selfish cleric of the middle ages. The modern message must be quite clear and unmistakable at this point.

How much pulpit Christianity, "protestant clericalism" it has been called, has been like a poultice to the conscience of the strong, the rich, the powerful, taking the sting of responsibility out of it while at the same time it has never ceased to insist on a meticulous fidelity from the weak! Were I to endow rescue missions, with the privilege of planting them, I should certainly plant them in newspaper offices, and editorial rooms; in governmental departments, especially foreign offices; in wealthy, exclusive clubs; in women's clubs, in banks, and perhaps in cathedrals "with a dim religious light." These symbolize the forces that make the morrow. To Christianize those forces is to fill the future with the

wonders of the cross. We need to discover again that Christ who as he trod the Galilean hills drew unto himself not only the weak but also the strong. We need to appreciate his Gospel anew in its fullness. It is a Gospel for the strong.

III

We need a deepening sense of social compunction. The most deplorable result of several centuries of a contracted individualist Gospel is the widespread feeling that one is responsible for one's own life alone; that one can tread the path of rectitude with pious unconcern. We have kept our armor polished but never engaged on any crusade; did not in fact seem conscious that a crusade was on. Life was just an endless review of shining equipment, to no purpose.

For a generation now a different emphasis has prevailed. More than one prophetic spirit has troubled us with the conviction that we are unshakably guilty for the social wrongs of our time; guilty, though we personally contribute ever so little to those wrongs; guilty, though we suffer no direct evil from those wrongs. The refrain in Kipling's "Tomlinson" has been caught up by ever more and more sensitive souls:

> "The sin that ye do by two and two
> Ye shall answer for one by one."

To-day it seems clear enough that not only personal wrong-doing but social inquity must be laid, a load of guilt, upon my soul before God.

It is a hard saying to insist that I must accuse myself of the social sin of my generation. It is exactly that that I am pleading for, a deepening sense of what Mrs. Humphry Ward has called "social compunction." Turn back to the opening years of the modern emphasis in the Christian life. It was said of Frederick Dennison Maurice that he charged himself with blame for the social wickedness and injustice of his time. A new era of social influence began for Christianity with that sense of social compunction. The biographer of General Booth tells us a gripping story of the redoubtable leader in his old age. He had gone to the home of his daughter for rest. His waning powers were no longer equal to the exacting duties of his office. During the afternoon of a cold winter day he was heard to pace the floor, sobbing and moaning. He had promised to remain quiet until called for tea. When reproached for his disobedience he broke out, "Oh, I know, but I've been thinking of all the suffering of little children, the children of the great cities, and I can't rest, I can't rest." He could do no more than "sit by and moan" but his sense of social compunction remained undiminished.

Take the experience of our own Emerson. At thirty-one (1834) he was living the life of a scholar and recluse. He was, as he himself put it, "hiving knowledge and concentrating powers to act well hereafter." To him were coming steadily the scholar's delight, knowledge, the increasing realization of his unwordly ambitions and fame. Meanwhile Garrison is abroad in the land; abolition sentiment is growing; men and

women are being aroused. Lovejoy goes to his lonely grave. Our philosopher remains unmoved. His task is clear. He must pursue his scholarly interest, still hiving knowledge for some future action. To engage in contemporary movements is to meddle, to miss your task. Then follows the defection of Webster, under the shade of whose spreading personality smaller souls were resting. Emerson's spirit is "stabbed broad awake." Hear him at fifty-one (1854), twenty years later, at Cooper Union in New York. He is aroused now. He delivers sledge hammer blows for abolition, and yet he can say "I have lived all my life without suffering any known inconvenience from American slavery; I never saw it; I never heard the whip; I never felt the check on my free speech and action." And yet he must act; he must take personal responsibility; he must accuse himself of the guilt of American slavery. From that time on he did not "cease from mental strife" till he saw a new America, a morrow full of wonders.

That the strong have an opportunity for service is true but it is only half the truth. They have a load of guilt to bear as well. Folly! The very folly of Calvary! For is not the significance of the cross just that, that Jesus accused himself of the sin of his time, and indeed of all time? That the Master took upon his own life the burden of social misery and bore it? Bishop Temple has reminded us that when the Master said at the institution of the Lord's Supper "This is my body, broken for you; this do in remembrance of me" He was asking nothing less than we break our own

bodies for him; that the real remembrance of Christ is a sacrificial guilt-bearing life.

I was in the Ruhr a few months back. I saw in a single day in the city of Essen:—a hospital situated on the richest coal mine in the world, yet not having fuel enough to heat the water with which to sterilize the instruments; for two weeks not a single operation had been performed while fellow humans suffered and died in unnatural agony; I saw an orphanage conducted by a Swedish woman of noble birth where twelve hundred palsied, decrepit old men and women and stunted, tubercular, little children were fed daily one bowl of thin soup. There was hardly fuel enough to heat that meager meal while across the street the school yard was full of coal. Twenty soldiers, accoutered for combat, and barbed wire defenses made certain that not a shovel full of that coal was used to ease the agony of these helpless ones. I met a middle-aged woman of culture and position. Said she, "We pray daily that our parents may die soon. The old people don't die soon enough." This is the disturbing thought that harasses me. How much of the guilt for an order of life in which age is not respected and childhood unsafe rests on me? How much of that guilt am I prepared to assume? Until I bend my back to that load of guilt have I any reasonable hope for the morrow?

"Sanctify yourselves for to-morrow Jehovah will work wonders among you." We who are out on the firing line, as it were, wonder as we look toward the universities. We long to see a rising tide of enthusiasm, intolerant alike of remedial injustice and the plausible

platitudes of the cynic. We wonder and take courage. It is not the way of youth to flee a task because it is difficult, to turn the back on the morrow because it calls for heroism. From "the countless springs of silent good" in the heart of youth will yet come a rising flood of waters of refreshing to give new life to our drooping ideals, new vigor to our parched hopes.

XII

A FAMINE OF PROPHETS

I

ALL leadership has broken down, political, economic, religious. Our religious life is no more confused than our political and economic life.

It is, indeed, a pretty compliment to religious leadership to be so greatly concerned about it. Such concern is tacit acknowledgment of the real worth of religion in social reconstruction. It may well be true that "religion is the only factor capable of acting rapidly upon the character of a people," in the words of Le Bon. Wherefore it becomes exceedingly urgent that our deficiencies in religious leadership be rectified.

To criticize the church and its leadership is a privilege never neglected or long unexercised. Mere criticism is gratuitous. It is very liable to lead to abuse. Moreover, as Glover has pointed out, "the church as a living thing has always had unsuspected powers of readjustment without losing its life." It is always setting at naught its critics just when their bitterest charges seem most true. "Sire," said Theodore de Bèze to the King of Navarre, "it belongs in truth to the Church of God, in the name of which I speak, to receive blows and not to give them; but it will please your Majesty to

remember that it is an anvil that has worn out many hammers."

My purpose in these pages is to point out at least two notable reasons for our present deficiency in leadership. These reasons are both cause and effect. They of themselves suggest certain constructive lines of amendment or renewal of effective leadership.

We suffer chiefly not from bad leadership, but small leadership—leadership not vicious, but impotent. The personal character and, frequently, administrative capability of the leaders are above reproach; but the leaders conceive their positions diminutively. They make of their opportunities mere fulfillment of routine duties. If it is not an actual case of "blind leaders of the blind," it certainly is producing the same result. We are in the ditch.

Even so there is something sinister about the popular clamor for adequate religious leadership. It is the cry of fear for social protection rather than the outburst of passion for social regeneration. Men are distraught. Customs long held sacred are under suspicion. Certain privileges and so-called "rights" are being closely scrutinized and menacingly questioned. In the resultant general alarm disturbed and uneasy persons cry unto the church for help. That their cry is in tones of bitter criticism is a bit of humor that escapes them. The liberal in the church is rather enjoying the situation —enjoying it in the sardonic manner of a Bernard Shaw. In other words, it is pathetically true that, in the judgment of many, "the church is the Tory party at prayer." What they want is not a strong church, but a

strong Tory party; hence much clamor for adequate religious leadership. Who but the church can effectively preach the immorality of change and the inviolability of tradition?

Old Anthony Collins, the Essex deist and free-thinker Sir Leslie Stephen wrote about, spread considerable confusion among church leaders and followers of his day by his incisive attacks on church teaching. When he was taken to task by his deist friends because he compelled his servants to attend church regularly, his defense was, "I do it that they may neither rob nor murder me." Many will recognize his type to-day.

These pages are particularly concerned with the more serious and vital phase of the matter. Why is religious leadership so ineffective as a force for social rebuilding? We want not a group of leaders who can teach us all to sing in unison, "as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen," but a group who can point out such changes as ought be effected in social organization. It is not a leadership that can preach with power and persuasion the immorality of change, but a leadership that can with statesmanlike foresight and prophetic insight take us through "change and decay" that we want. Why haven't we such leadership? What is the matter with our present religious leadership?

II

We are fallen upon evil times. There is a famine of prophets, not a Jonah in all this wide land whom we

care to cast overboard; not a man among us gifted with the insight of a Jeremiah or an Isaiah, and thereby enabled to preach a message of doom, the prophet's invariable credential. Nay, let one attempt such a message, and with one accord we all charge against him "*cynicism*, the greatest of all sins." Paradoxical as it may seem, a society may well lose all hope when it knows no preachers of doom in it. Society progresses exactly in proportion to the number of prophetic heretics it has.

Why have we no prophets? There are numerous minor reasons. Our leaders, accepted and recognized as such, are usually men in official positions. Discretion and tact are requisite to successful administration. That at once precludes the development of prophetic powers. When occasionally a prophet does speak forth from some pulpit, apologies are soon made to the wealthy parties most interested, and the lone preacher is neutralized.

But there is an important historic reason why we have no prophets. The history of the origin of the Christian sermon, a very thorough account of which is to be had in "The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church," by Dr. Edwin Hatch, is instructive. In the primitive church preaching was unknown. Instead of the preacher, the church had the prophet. His function was not that of prediction, but of spontaneous utterance. "He preached because he could not help it, because there was a divine breath breathing within him which must needs find

utterance." It is in this sense only that the prophets of the early church were preachers.

Inevitably, Christianity made contacts with the Greek world. In the process of interpenetration that followed, Christianity both gave and took. One of the things it gave up was "prophesying"; one of the things it took from the Greek world was that which became the Christian sermon.

There was in the Greek world that Christianity entered a species of public lecturers known as sophists. The subjects of these sophists were usually morality or theology. They preached what we would call "sermons." Robed in a special gown, seated on an elevated professorial chair, before an audience called either by personal invitation of the lecturer or by regular enrollment, the sophist would discourse in the most refined rhetorical forms on these vital themes. His discourses were frequently interrupted by applause or by shouts of "Bravo!" "Wonderful!" "Divine!"

The sophist made both money and reputation out of his trade; frequently he was appointed to lofty positions in the state; sometimes he lived at the public expense. While among the Christians of that period "sophist" was always a word of scorn, nevertheless the influence of sophism upon Christianity was very considerable. Spontaneity of utterance in the primitive church, prophetic utterance, one might say, died almost entirely during the second century. More accurately it was crushed by the official groups of leaders in the church. Such advocates of spontaneity of utterance as survived in Asia Minor, the Montanists, were

quickly charged with heresy and properly condemned. To this very day Tertullian is regarded with grave suspicion by many because he shared the Montanists' view.

By the fourth century spontaneous utterance was unknown and the Christian sermon, much as we know it, was the order of the day. The sermon was a direct result of Greek contact with Christianity. Whether Christian preachers became enamored of wealth, such as sophists accumulated readily, or of high position, which was always accorded the more able orators,—one case is on record of a sophist so influential that he could turn the Emperor Antoninus Pius, who had come as a guest unexpectedly when the sophist was absent, out of doors at midnight with impunity,—or whether in unconscious imitation they fell into sophist ways, one cannot at this late date say with certainty. All these motives may have had some influence in accomplishing the change. The fact is that the form and content of the Christian message were changed, and remain changed to this day. The prophet's habit of spontaneous utterance gave way to the orator's habit of polished discourse, adorned with the finest phrases selected from the abundant literature of myth, fable, and classic lore. With the change in habit came a change in spirit and purpose. "The voice of the prophet had ceased; the voice of the preacher had begun."

The preacher was usually trained in the rhetorical methods of the day. Chrysostom, for instance, was trained under the well-known Libanius, leading sophist orator of his day, who on his death-bed said of

him that he would have been his worthiest successor "if the Christians had not stolen him."

A description of a fourth-century preacher by Chrysostom, the leading light of that century, is instructive: "There are many preachers who make long sermons: if they are well applauded, they are as glad as if they had obtained a kingdom; if they bring their sermon to an end in silence, their despondency is worse, I may almost say, than hell. It is this that ruins churches, that you do not seek to hear sermons that touch the heart, but sermons that will delight your ears with their intonations and the structure of their phrases, just as if you were listening to singers and lute-players. And we preachers humor your fancies, instead of trying to crush them. We act like a father who gives a sick child a cake or an ice, or something else that is merely nice to eat—just because he asks for it; and takes no pains to give him what is good for him; and then when the doctors blame him says, 'I could not bear to hear my child cry' . . . That is what we do when we elaborate beautiful sentences, fine combinations and harmonies, to please and not to profit, to be admired and not to instruct, to delight and not to touch you, to go away with your applause in our ears, and not to better your conduct. Believe me, I am not speaking at random: when you applaud me as I speak, I feel at the moment as it is natural for a man to feel. I will make a clean breast of it. Why should I not? I am delighted and overjoyed. And then when I go home and reflect that the people who have been applauding me have received no benefit, and indeed that whatever

benefit they might have had has been killed by the applause and praises, I am sore at heart, and I lament and fall to tears, and I feel as though I had spoken altogether in vain, and I say to myself, what is the good of all your labors, seeing that your hearers don't want to reap any fruit out of all that you say? And I have often thought of laying down a rule absolutely prohibiting all applause, and urging you to listen in silence." Tradition has it that tumultous applause followed the delivery of this particular sermon.

"Philosophy died, because for all but a small minority it ceased to be real. It passed from the sphere of thought and conduct to that of exposition and literature. Its preachers preached, not because they were bursting with truths which could not help finding expression, but because they were masters of fine phrases and lived in an age in which fine phrases had a value. It died, in short, because it had become sophistry."

Rhetoric thus made philosophy unreal. Similarly, what rhetoric in the Greek world did to philosophy, the adoption of it in the Christian world eventually wrought upon Christianity, in that it destroyed the religious reality of the prophet's message. "So it has been with Christianity. It came into the world in the simple dress of a Prophet of Righteousness. It won that world by the stern reality of its life, by the subtle bonds of its brotherhood, by its message of consolation and of hope. Around it thronged the race of eloquent talkers who persuaded it to change its dress and to assimilate its language to their own. It seemed thereby to win a speedier and completer victory. But it purchased con-

quest at the price of reality. With that its progress stopped. There has been an element of sophistry in it ever since; and so far as in any age that element has been dominant, so far has the progress of Christianity been arrested. Its progress is arrested now, because many of its preachers live in an unreal world. The truths they set forth are truths of utterance rather than truths of their lives. But if Christianity is to be again the power that it was in its earliest ages, it must renounce its costly purchase. A class of rhetorical chemists would be thought of only to be ridiculed: a class of rhetorical religionists is only less anomalous because we are accustomed to it. The hope of Christianity is that the class which was artificially created may ultimately disappear, and that the sophistical element in Christian preaching will melt, as a transient mist, before the preaching of the prophets of the ages to come, who, like the prophets of the ages that are long gone by, will speak only "as the Spirit gives them utterance."

These sentences by Dr. Hatch are solemnly prophetic. They lay bare unwittingly the vital defect of religious leadership—a defect not of organization, but of pulpit experience and utterance. The Christian pulpit lives largely in a realm of unreality or small realities. How can the great mass of Christian people move to the achievement of dominant realities?

The same century that gave mankind the "modern" sermon fastened upon us the "modern" creed. Many preachers feel, a few say openly, that reality must remain foreign to the pulpit message so long as preachers must assume a creed that knows nothing of the work

of Jesus, but knows only his metaphysical status, which does not concern the modern man. The very complaint ought to fill us with shame. If we need a battle-cry, let us have one that can and will rally the conscience of Christendom. "For if the trumpet give an uncertain voice, who shall prepare himself for war?" If our present creeds ignore the social aims of the gospel, let us have creeds that proclaim those aims. Why must we, like George Eliot, be *forever* "influenced by minds inferior to our own"? Half indignantly, Glover asks, "But what were the credentials of the bishops to warrant them in settling the Christian Faith?"

Our pulpit masters and creed-mongers need a baptism of prophetic unction. This is the chief deficiency of religious leadership.

The need brings us forthwith face to face with the second major defect of religious leadership—the conspiracy against youth, the widespread and prevailing conspiracy against youth.

III

Glance at the faces and figures of our leaders and see if you can detect any signs of youthfulness. At a recent convention of a certain great and notable religious organization, notable for its service to young men in years past, in fact notable in that it is a young men's organization,—it so proclaims itself and is so chartered,—there was on the platform at any given moment not a single man who seemed younger than forty. In no sense was youth impressed upon one.

No young men made committee reports, no young men were elected to office, no young men spoke from the floor.

Age is no crime. Nicodemus was an old man, honored and respected by his fellows, "a teacher in Israel." Jesus did not condemn him. He was indeed very patient with him. Yet he "understood not these things." When Jesus sought understanding minds, he sought youth. What reliance could he place upon a man coming by night, courteous, curious, but obtuse? Isn't it like putting "new wine into old skins?"

It is contrary to nature to expect Nicodemus to accomplish the work of Paul, for instance. Jesus did not expect it. We note no impression of disappointment in Jesus when the aged leader left him. It was as it must be according to nature. Ross assures us: "In general it is young men who provide the logic, decision and enthusiasm necessary to relieve society of the crushing burden that each generation seeks to roll upon the shoulders of the next. The Greeks were right in accepting Hesiod's maxim 'work for youth, counsel for maturity, prayers for old age'—The domination of graybeards is equivalent to a fatty degeneration of the social brain."

There is unanimous agreement that the work done by the council of Nicæa was well done. This great council came at a critical time in the history of our religion. There is, unfortunately perhaps, genuine satisfaction to this very day with the results achieved. Wherefore, I conclude that the leadership was sound and far-seeing; there is no doubt that it was courageous. Yet the

great figure that dominated that assembly, Athanasius, is supposed to have been in the neighborhood of thirty years of age.

When the rigid shell of medievalism began to crack and the germinating life within to assert itself, the voice of leadership once more was the voice of youth. Luther, on the day when he nailed the theses on the church door at Wittenberg, was only thirty-four. All his great work was done before he was forty. Carlyle has called the Diet of Worms of 1521 "the greatest moment in modern history." The dominating figure, the great soul through which eternity spoke to time, was Luther, a monk of thirty-eight.

Next to the Reformation of Luther, the greatest movement in modern religious life was the Evangelical Revival led by John Wesley. Among English-speaking peoples this movement has had more widespread influence than any other in our history. Coming when it did, at a time when even Bishop Butler had insisted that the church was dead and all that remained was to give it a decent burial, the Wesleyan Revival wrought a complete social regeneration. Lecky assures us that one thing only saved England from the horrors of a revolution similar to the French Revolution. Social conditions were similar. The elements that caused the French Revolution were largely present in English social life. But John Wesley's heart had been warmed in Aldersgate meeting in 1738. From that heart-warming came the passion that purified English social life. The leader of the movement was a young man of thirty-six.

Or what shall one say of the Pilgrim movement? "Pilgrim Fathers" we call them, strangely. Of the one hundred and two persons who shipped in the *Mayflower* thirty-nine were under twenty-one years of age. Bradford, the "greatheart" of the group, was exactly thirty-one; Winslow was twenty-five; Standish was thirty-six; Alden was twenty-one. Only two of the entire group were over fifty years of age, and only nine over forty. Veritably, this was an adventure of youth.

Quiet rebellion possesses the hearts of thousands of young men both in pulpit and pew throughout our land. I make this assertion on the basis of the known attitude of scores of my own friends and acquaintances. No one feels more keenly the inadequacy of our religious leadership than the youth of our land. Our leadership is not despised or held in contempt. The valiant men who in their days of youth wrought boldly and courageously, but who have since aged in service, though unfortunately they are still officially the leaders, are held in the greatest respect and reverence by youth. That is not the point. The prophets such as we have, Rauschenbusch, Gladden, Williams and others have thrilled the hearts of great numbers of young men and women. To many has been imparted social vision, without which "people perish." A deep yearning for daring attempts in the gospel program for social life grips youth, but the conspiracy against youth has prevented this yearning from becoming articulate and thereby becoming effective.

That the situation is similar in England was brought home to me recently. While discussing a certain dis-

tinguished and daring leader in the Church of England with a young priest of that church, he said:

"You know, most of us young fellows agree with ——, but we can't say so just yet. The Church of England is too 'fixy.' "

Throughout the church of Jesus Christ—the church, that is, of a young leader—to-day there prevails too much of the sinister spirit Kipling observed among the incompetent English generals in the Boer War. He puts into their mouths these words, so applicable to much religious leadership:

"The Lamp of our Youth will be utterly out; but we shall subsist on the smell of it,
And whatever we do, we shall fold our hands and suck our gums and think well of it.
Yes, we shall be perfectly pleased with our work, and that is the perfectest Hell of it."

There are young Isaiahs a-plenty who at twenty-two have seen "the Lord, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up." It is a vision of possibilities rather than of actualities. Now that Uzziah, the aged king, is dead,—for it was "in the year that King Uzziah died" that young Isaiah saw the Lord,—some progress in social justice can be made. Hearts are pulsating with passion to lift up the throne of the Lord in the midst of modern social life. Greatly impatient, these young Isaiahs wait and wait and wait for their experienced leaders to lead them into the fray. Those same leaders

"Abide until the battle is won ere they amble into the fray."

And there you have the situation. Reverence for age and respect for "service records" restrain youth, and

meanwhile the church ambles along in an amusing and harmless way—so harmless, in fact, that some one has suggested that the unrighteous profiteer and the iniquitous politician are more afraid of Ramsay MacDonald or Eugene Debs than they are of the whole church of Jesus Christ! Time was when a Peter or a Paul in prison struck terror in the hearts of the official groups!

The sociologist is quite certain that "new movements are born in young minds, and that lack of experience enables youth eternally to recall civilization to sound bases." History has a stubborn way of insisting upon the validity of this generalization. Not in the life of organized religion alone is this a fact, but in the life of states as well. The eleven men who were destined to become the leaders of the French Revolution averaged, at its inception, thirty-four years of age. The American Constitution, "the grandest work of the hand of man," was fathered by a mere lad, James Madison, aged thirty-six, while at least one of his confreres was an unbearded youth of twenty-one, Jonathan Dayton of New Jersey. Why should the church resist this social law?

IV

Three alternatives are before us if we would redeem our religious leadership. Each one is beset with great difficulties. The situation is not without hope, however.

The first alternative is to provide a place for youth in the positions of leadership. That this will be ever

done, is most unlikely. Christian councils from Nicæa onward have been "filled with officials and old men." They present a solid wall of opposition to the ardor of youth. To break through to positions of leadership would require a skill in ecclesiastical politics youth has not the patience to acquire.

The second alternative is to substitute extra-ecclesiastical leadership in religion for our present ecclesiastical leadership. That is to say, let official church leaders worry along in their harmless way while we look to sociologists, biologists, editors, poets, professors, and others to lead us in the things of the spirit. It may be easier to develop a new race of leaders from such groups than to restore church leadership to its place of power.

Extra-ecclesiastical leadership in religion would seem to create an anomalous situation. Such a situation is not unknown to history. To wield a power denied him in the pulpit Emerson had to resort to the lecture platform and the essayist's study. His real leadership was extra-ecclesiastical. His was the voice, the "clear and pure voice," which brought a new, moving, and unforgettable strain to the Oxford of Matthew Arnold's youth. It was the voice of certainty. Exactly such a voice we are eager to hear to-day.

In utter despair of the priesthood and the church and in agony of soul, Whittier wrote his great hymns, which became flaming beacons to rally the spiritual and moral forces of the land. A poet again stepped in and led where the appointed leader was wanting. That Whittier's leadership was effective is proved by the

fact that Dr. Crandall, a Washington physician, languished in prison until he contracted a fatal illness under sentence for the misdemeanor of reading a borrowed copy of Whittier's pamphlet, "Justice and Expediency."

The supremacy of extra-ecclesiastical leadership is not a comforting thought to the churchman. Social necessity is no respecter of tradition, however. Moreover, for a decade or more the tendency of ardent men has been to forsake the church and its ministry for positions with social agencies where they can, as they say, more easily and wholly fulfill Christ's mission of service to humanity. It may well be that out of that group of men will come a new race of leaders.

The third alternative is to develop within the church, among the young men of it, groups of prophetic spirits, such as Wesley's Holy Club at Oxford. From such groups we might reasonably expect another Wesley.

It is not beyond the reach of the imagination to suppose that, if we could develop within the church a "preaching order" made up of men who are relieved of the burden of organization and routine and are expected to furnish intelligent, daring, consecrated leadership according to the Gospel of Jesus, such a "preaching order" might well become a new race of prophets who, like the prophets of the primitive church, preached by "spontaneous utterance."

It may seem rash to risk our social well-being to a leadership of "spontaneous utterance." The psychologist has spoiled our respect for such utterance. It is well to bear in mind, therefore, that Jesus was just

that sort of prophet and leader. That, moreover, as Hastings Rashdall has pointed out, "the greatest moral teachers of mankind have not usually been speculative philosophers. That was eminently true with Jesus Christ and his first disciples. An instinct of reverence is apt to blind us to the immense amount of real, hard thinking which was implied in the religious and moral teaching of Jesus. The greatness, the originality, of Jesus was intellectual as well as moral. It came to him by way of intuition." Prophetic preaching does not imply strange visions, ecstasies, tongues, etc. It does imply straight, hard thinking, in terms of reality, upon the vexing issues of our present social life. "Spontaneous utterance" might well be described as giving expression to the deepest convictions of the soul, arrived at after penetrating study of the Gospel of Jesus, combined with a readiness to bear the full consequence of the proclamation of the complete Gospel.

Had we a "preaching order" of neo-prophets now, an order of men (and why not women, too?) whose sole social function would be to present persistently the gospel teaching concerning war and international relations, concerning wages, housing, and industrial relations, concerning social, creedal, sexual relations, we would no doubt witness the reënactment of certain well-known scenes of history, such scenes as the strangling of Savonarola for criticizing the conduct of Pope Alexander VI or the burning of Huss for suggesting the revision of the creeds of the church. We are in a mood of reaction, a mood for betraying prophets, but

"Men betrayed are mighty and great are the wrongfully dead."

One such betrayal, a single social martyrdom of a single person who was "persecuted for righteousness' sake," who suffered for "my sake and the gospel's," would do more to redeem religious leadership from its state of pointlessness—that is, of futility—than all the wit and wisdom contributed by all the critics. Calvary precedes resurrection.

THE END

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